Book Extracts

A SADHU'S REMINISCENCES
OF RAMANA MAHARSHI

By
SADHU ARUNACHALA
(A. W. Chadwick)

Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya

INTRODUCTION

Sadhu Arunachala of Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, is a good example of perfect devotion to our Guru, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Some twenty-five years ago the name and fame of Bhagavan Sri Ramana dragged him from England to India, and having come to Bhagavan's Supreme Abode he never returned. (*Yath Gathva Na Nivartanthe tath Dhama Paramam Mama*. That is My Supreme Abode whence none returns. *Bhagavad Gita* XV-6). Visitors to the Ashram now see him sitting at the Shrine of Bhagavan every day punctually between 8 to 10 a.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. as formerly they saw him sitting in the old Hall in Bhagavan's physical presence. So naturally he has much to tell us not only of Bhagavan and his teachings, but also of many things that happened in Bhagavan's presence. The Ashram has given the English-knowing world the diaries of Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi, Sri Devaraja Mudaliar and Mr. S. S. Cohen. While the diary of Sri Ramanananda Saraswathi is a record of talks with Bhagavan through several years, the latter two chronicle day to day incidents. In the same vein Sadhu Arunachala gives us in this book what he saw happening in Bhagavan's presence but only such as have for the most part been unrecorded in the books of others. Thus *A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi* seeks to supplement the previous publications.

It is needless to say that the Sadhu records his facts with great accuracy and respect for truth and hence this book will be welcomed by the devotees of Bhagavan and others. The writer of this introduction has a very great regard for the Sadhu as a writer, as he knows that the Sadhu has rendered into English all the original works of Bhagavan and had them perused by Bhagavan himself but has chosen not to publish them out of modesty, as he feels there is no need to do so in the face of the *Collected Works of Bhagavan* given to the public by the Ashram as its own authentic publication.

The *sadhu's* "*Poems of Ramana Maharshi*" published last year has placed us all in a debt of gratitude to him and the present Reminiscences increase this debt. There is no need to comment on the contents of this volume, which when once begun will carry the reader right through.

This short note can conclude by drawing the attention of the readers to what the Sadhu himself observes about Bhagavan in the Epilogue:

"Though we talk as though he (the Master) were dead, he is indeed here and very much alive, as he promised, in spite of appearances."

This gives the clue to the *sadhu's* inherence in Bhagavan's Home. May Bhagavan bless him!

This prefatory note ought to come from some worthier soul, but the *sadhu's* request to me could not be refused and that is my only apology for writing this.

T. K. SUNDARESA IYER

FOREWORD

by

SRI RAMANANANDA SARASWATHI

An ordinary reader will find this small book very interesting reading and useful too; a discriminating one will appreciate how the teachings have been brought in unobtrusively and, as it were, unconsciously; a good *sadhak* will delight to note how the meanings of *maya*, of "original sin", of *dhyana, savikalpa samadhi, nirvikalpa samadhi* and *sahaja samadhi* have been simplified. Without polemics the highest truths of the Upanishads have been lucidly stated and many a seeker will be thrown back into the bosom of Reality while reading it. Bhagavan Ramana was the greatest miracle in our living memory not only because He was the living Reality but also He made the same so easily accessible to His votaries among whom Mr. Chadwick - or Sadhu Arunachala - stands one of the foremost. I say *foremost* deliberately because he has made the same truths so clear in his inimitably simple way.

The pen picture of Sri Ramana is so vivid and complete that any worthy disciple cannot fail to testify to its being faithful in spirit and accurate in detail.

Of course there are some elaborate books on Sri Ramana which present the different facets of the Gem but this book presents the Gem itself to the readers!

God bless the unostentatious writer of this small and invaluable book!

We regret that since the publication of the First Edition of this book in 1961, Sadhu Arunachala passed away in April 1962, Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi in February 1963 and Sri T. K Sundaresa Iyer in February 1965.

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I first came to Sri Ramana Ashram on November 1st 1935. I had heard of Bhagavan through Brunton's book, *A Search in Secret India*, and immediately decided that here was my Guru. Directly I could settle up my affairs I left my house and possessions in Majorca and went home to England for a short stay with my sisters before finally leaving for India.

Off and on for a number of years I had been practising some form of meditation on my return from work in the evening, (I was at that time employed in Chile), and, after I finally retired, in my own home. This meditation of mine actually turned out to be very much the same that I learnt later when I came to Tiruvannamalai. I had argued that since God had created the world, (there must be some beginning somewhere, and this necessitated a Creator), it was only out of Himself that He could have done so, for if there was some other apart from Himself then He could not be God, undisputed and omnipotent.

So I decided that the seeker himself was God or, as Bhagavan puts it, the Self. My method of meditation then, was to make the mind cease from thinking as an individual and just rest in its God-head: "Do not think. Be!" I recognised, of course, the danger of a blank and was under no delusion that such a blank could be a goal or an end in itself. This form of meditation I carried on, off and on, from 1924 until I came to Tiruvannamalai eleven years later. But in between times were periods when I did not meditate at all. I had a conviction that I could not lead a worldly life and at the same time strive after spiritual attainment; the two things for me dwelt in separate compartments. I had not then realized the truth of Advaita that there could be no splitting in this way, that the worldly life was just as unreal as the unworldly life, or, if you prefer, that both were as real as each other. They were *prarabdha*, which had in any case to be worked out; that actually there was no such thing as good and evil, only attachment; that actions were actions and it was identifying oneself with such that mattered and not the actions in themselves. I still believed in the importance of morals, as such, as absolute standards, and, so my meditation could be nothing but a spasmodic affair.

No doubt in some ways, at least as a beginning, this was good, for in the earlier stages there must be a rule or some sort of code to keep oneself concentrated on the work, though this rule will automatically drop away in time. However, as time went on, I became convinced that my attitude had been wrong, that, whatever one's life, a short period of meditation should be practised each day, preferably in the early morning.

That the method that I devised of stilling the mind and concentrating on my own essential core, which I had decided was God, differed little from the method of seeking out the Self by constant enquiry and search for the Witness as taught by Bhagavan, there can be no doubt. I was lucky that the Truth came to me so easily. Of course it bore out Bhagavan's saying that, "Chadwick was with us before, he was one of us. He had some desire to be born in the West, and that he has now fulfilled." So it seems that the memory of the teaching given in a previous birth was bearing fruit in this.

I arrived at Tiruvannamalai by the early morning train. It was a bright clear day at the beginning of winter and I was immediately struck by the wonderful atmosphere of the place, which one almost felt that one could take hold of, so potent was it. I was met at the station by Ganapathi Sastry. I had asked the Ashram to send someone to meet me and so naturally concluded that this was the person, but it transpired that, though he had once been one of their men, at the time he was out of favour and had no

authority to meet me. The emissary sent by the Ashram never showed himself when he saw someone else looking after me. Why trouble?

Ganapathi Sastry had once been a local magistrate and had been a devotee of Bhagavan for years. He had a special liking for a white face and would attach himself to any European or American that came to the Ashram. But to his credit it must be said that he could be very helpful to a newcomer.
In the Ashram I was given a room newly built at the side of the store-room, which I shared with Annamalai Swamy; here I remained for three and a half months until a room had been built for me at the Ashram grounds. This room I have occupied ever since.

Bhagavan came back from his after-breakfast stroll at about seven o'clock and I went in to the old Hall and joined him. I was given a chair just beside the door facing him, which I occupied for some months until I realized that people objected. I did not know then that it was considered disrespectful by Indians to sit on the same level as the Guru or even to occupy a chair at all in his presence. I had then, and still have, considerable difficulty in sitting on the floor for any length of time in spite of years of practice. Afterwards I devised a meditation belt of cotton cloth which I brought round from the back across my raised knees and with this support could sit comfortably for long periods. Such belts are regularly used by Yogis, though strange as it may seem I had no idea of this when I devised my own. Bhagavan told me that his father had had one but had not used it in public. Once some boys came into the Hall and saw me meditating in the belt, they asked Bhagavan, "Why has he been tied up?" Bhagavan, who had a great sense of humour, was much amused. However, in spite of the fact that the belt made me conspicuous, I was so keen on meditating in Bhagavan's presence that I continued to use it for many years.

To try and describe my reactions when I first came, into the presence of Bhagavan is difficult. I felt the tremendous peace of his presence, his graciousness. It was not as though I were meeting him for the first time. It seemed that I had always known him. It was not even like the renewal of an old acquaintanceship. It had always been there though I had not been conscious of it at the time. Now I knew.

In spite of being entirely new to India and its customs, nothing that happened in these first days of my stay at the Ashram seemed strange to me, it was all quite natural. It was only afterwards when I had dwelt in India for some time that I began to realize how gracious Bhagavan had been to me from the very first. And this attitude of mine was to my advantage. Bhagavan responded to people's reactions. If you behaved absolutely naturally with no strain, Bhagavan's behaviour was similar. I do not mean, of course, that Bhagavan really had reactions or that his behaviour could ever be anything but natural, it was only that it appeared like that to us, for he was like a mirror which seemed to reflect back your own feelings. If you were reticent and over-awed he appeared almost stand-offish, but on the other hand if you responded quite naturally to the all-embracing love of his presence, then he treated you as one of his own.

When I entered the Hall for the first time he was seated on his couch facing the door. It was about 7 o'clock and he had just returned from his stroll on the Hill. He greeted me with his lovely smile and asked if I had had my breakfast and then told me to sit down. There were quite a lot of people present that day, though this was some time before the crowds started to be a regular feature of the Ashram, it must have been some Hindu festival because the lighted camphor was brought in after Pooja which was only done on special days and *Na Karmana* was chanted in his presence. Bhagavan talked to me

the whole morning till it was time for the mid-day meal. He asked me many questions about myself and my life. All this seemed quite natural. Later I was to discover that he usually greeted visitors on arrival with a glance, made a few remarks and then remained silent, or waited for them to put their doubts and question him so that he might answer. Or often he appeared unconscious that anybody had entered, though this was only in appearance, for he was always fully conscious.

He was very interested to hear about Brunton whom I had met in London, and who was returning to India in a few months. This was the first time he would be at the Ashram since the publication of his book, *A Search in Secret India*. Brunton had surely been inspired by Bhagavan to spread his teachings, or at least a knowledge of Bhagavan's existence, in the West. He undoubtedly wrote a lot of rubbish afterwards and was a plagiarist of the first water, but very many came to Bhagavan because of his book and were grateful to him for the indication he had given them of where to find their Guru.

I had always wondered how it was that St. Paul, who was a most orthodox Jew, hated Christ and persecuted the Christians, interpreted his great experience on the Damascus road in terms of Christ and afterwards became an ardent Christian himself. So one day I asked Bhagavan.

He said that St. Paul was always thinking about Christ and the Christians, they were never out of his mind, so when he returned to self-consciousness after his experience he identified his realization with this predominant thought. And he referred to Ravana as an example. Ravana hated Rama, never ceased to think of him and, dying, Rama was the uppermost thought in his mind and so he realized God. It is not a question of love or hate, it is just the question of what is in the mind at the time. People judge the deeds of others as good or bad, but it is the doing itself that matters and not the complexion of the deed. The whole secret lies in whether we are attached to our actions or not. A person who spends his time in good deeds can be much more attached to them than the so-called bad man is to his. And it is the one who drops off all attachments first who will be Self-realized soonest.

Good and bad are found eventually to be only relative terms. Self-enquiry is found to be no more than the discarding of *Vasanas*. So long as one single *Vasana* remains, good or bad, so long must we remain unrealized.

Bhagavan was a very beautiful person; he shone with a visible light or aura. He had the most delicate hands I have ever seen with which alone he could express himself, one might almost say talk. His features were regular and the wonder of his eyes was famous. His forehead was high and the dome of his head the highest I have ever seen. As this in India is known as the dome of Wisdom it was only natural that it should be so. His body was well formed and of only medium height, but this was not apparent as his personality was so dominant that one looked upon him as tall. He had a great sense of humour and when talking a smile was never far from his face. He had many jokes in his repertoire and was a magnificent actor, he would always dramatise the protagonists of any story he related. When the recital was very pathetic he would be filled with emotion and unable to proceed. When people came to him with their family stories he would laugh with the happy and at times shed tears with the bereaved. In this way he seemed to reciprocate the emotions of others. He never raised his voice and

if he did occasionally seem angry there was no sign of it on the surface of his Peace. Talk to him immediately afterwards and he would answer calmly and quite undisturbed. With others some effect of the anger will still remain for a while even after the cause is gone. Internally we all take time to regain our composure, but with him there was no reaction. He would never touch money, not because he hated it, he knew that for the purposes of daily life it was necessary, but he had never had need of it and was not interested in it. Money and presents came to the Ashram; well, that was all right, the management needed them to be able to carry on, but there was no need for them to worry about it or ask people to give. God would provide.

People said that he would not talk but this was untrue, as were many of the other foolish legends about him. He did not speak unnecessarily and his apparent silence only showed how much foolish chatter usually goes on amongst ourselves. He preferred every sort of simplicity and liked to sit on the floor, but a couch had been forced upon him and this became his home for most of the twenty-four hours of the day. He would never, if he could help it, allow any preference to be shown to him. And in the dining-hall he was adamant on this point. Even if some special medicine or tonic were given to him he wanted to share it with everybody. "If it is good for me then it must be good for the rest," he would argue and make them distribute it round the dining-hall. He would wander out on to the Hill a few times a day, and if any attachment to anything on earth could be said of him, it was surely an attachment to the Hill. He loved it and said it was God Himself.
He used to say that it was the top of the spiritual axis of the earth; there must, he said, be another mountain corresponding to Arunachala at exactly the opposite side of the globe, the corresponding pole of the axis. So certain was he of this that one evening he made me fetch an atlas and see if this was not correct. I found, according to the atlas, the exact opposite point came in the sea about an hundred miles off the coast of Peru. He seemed doubtful about this. I pointed out that there might be some island at this spot or a mountain under the sea. It was not until some years after Bhagavan's passing that a visiting Englishman had a tale of a spot, supposed to be a great secret power centre, in the Andes somewhere in this latitude. Later I found that though a centre had certainly been started it had failed. Since then I have been told of another person who is practising meditation in solitude in the region of the Andes in Ecuador. So it does appear as though there were some strange attraction about that part of the globe. The earth is not an exact sphere and maps are not so accurate as all that, so we are unable to pin it down to any definite point. It is quite possible that more is going on in that part of the world than we know and this would fit in well with what Bhagavan said. However I could never discuss the matter with Bhagavan as it was not until many years after his passing that I had any indication that anything of this sort was happening in those parts. I had many years ago travelled extensively in that country but had never seen anything which would lead me to think that there might be important spiritual-centres there.

Bhagavan would never eat during an eclipse of the sun or moon, a custom that still continues in the Ashram, where food may only be cooked after the eclipse is finished. He told me that the stomach did not digest while the eclipse was proceeding and so it was bad for the health to eat at that time. However, he did not take the ritual bath at the beginning and end of an eclipse as is usual with orthodox Brahmins.

He was most dainty in his movements and to watch him eat was a pleasure. He always left his leaf so clean that it appeared as if it had not been used. Eating neatly in Indian fashion is an art in itself and at this Bhagavan was past master.

He was always scrupulously clean and his body gave off a faint perfume, though he never used any scented soap. At one time he had used snuff but had given it up before I joined the Ashram. He used to chew betel regularly just after meals and before he went for his stroll on the Hill; he would thoroughly wash out his mouth immediately afterwards. There was never any stain on his lips, and he chewed only for a few minutes, and then purely as a digestive.

One morning Bhagavan was about to go out and was only waiting for the attendant to give him the betel, which was always placed by his side when it was time for his walk. For some reason the attendant did not do it, everybody in the Hall was waiting expectantly but could do nothing about it as the management did not allow anybody to attend on Bhagavan except those who had been specially detailed. Eventually Bhagavan got up and left the Hall without it. From that day on he never chewed again. He would not cause inconvenience to anybody, even the attendant whose duty it was to look after such things, nor would he be bound by any habit. We were all sad at this mishap, as everybody felt that the betel did help the body to bear its pain. But what did the health of the body matter, he would say. "The body itself is the worst sickness."

Bhagavan always radiated tremendous peace, but on those occasions when crowds were attracted to the Ashram such as Jayanthi, Mahapooja, Deepam and such functions, this increased to an extraordinary degree. The numbers seemed to call up some reserve of hidden force, and it was a great experience to sit with him at such times. His eyes took on a far-away look and he sat absolutely still as if unconscious of his surroundings, except for an occasional smile of recognition as some old devotee prostrated.

Bhagavan never encouraged people who came and started to confess their sins. He would not allow them to continue but shut them up by telling them not to dwell on the past but to find out who they were now in the present. The point was not the act but attachment to it that mattered. Dwelling on it in retrospect was the worst thing they could possibly do. This itself was attachment.

After I had been meditating in the presence of Bhagavan for some months, I reached a certain stage when I would be overcome by fear. I asked Bhagavan about this. I was assured by some of those present in the Hall at the time, not of course by Bhagavan, that this was all wrong and quite absurd. In fact they laughed at me for my foolishness. Bhagavan was not so amused. He explained that it was the ego that experienced the fear as it felt that it was gradually losing its grip. It was, in fact, dying, and naturally resented it. He asked me, "To whom is the fear? It is all due to the habit of identifying the body with the Self. Repeated experience of separation from this idea will make one familiar with this state and fear will then automatically cease." Since then I have come to realize that Bhagavan mentions this fear in the second verse of the *Ulladu Narpadu*:

"Tis only those who fear death intensely take refuge at the feet of the Lord."

In fact it is really a good sign when one is following the method of self-enquiry, though it must be overcome.

Yet even supposing one has got rid of most of one's *Vasanas*, how does attainment actually occur? On this question of attaining Self-realization Bhagavan told me that in the early stages a person who was regularly meditating would usually at first go into a trance which would probably last for some thirty minutes, and if he continued with his *Tapas* properly such Samadhi would become more frequent. So carried away by it would he be that he would be able to think of nothing but slipping away to some quiet corner to meditate undisturbed. He would lose all interest in everything else until that time when he became established in the Self and no more meditation was necessary.

He had then attained *Sahaja Samadhi* or his natural state. But there were no fixed rules. Some might attain this state quietly and unrecognised, without even the necessity of the process of meditation. However, Bhagavan explained, although there were no actual stages in Self-realization, there was a deepening of one's Sadhana as explained above.

In the Indian spiritual vocabulary you find the terms *Manolaya, Savikalpa Samadhi, Nirvikalpa Samadhi* and *Sahaja Samadhi*, and these are apt to cause some confusion to those not familiar with the terminology.

Manolaya is just a blank mind. Advaitins are often accused of trying to achieve this, which is quite absurd though I have at times met those who told me that this was their aim, and they would be most happy to achieve it. I would point out to them that this could be attained by them every night in sleep so what was the use of undergoing all sorts of austerities, spending hours in meditation to obtain a thing that could be got by just lying down on their bed?

With regard to this Bhagavan used to tell the story of the Yogi who was practising *Tapas* on the bank of the Ganges. He told his disciple to go and fetch him some water and in the meantime went into a state of *Manolaya*. After a thousand years he awoke, the first thing he did was to demand his water, but the disciple had become skeleton at his side, the Ganges had changed its course and the whole country was different. What good had the long trance done? It had just been a blank when time stood still.

Savikalpa Samadhi is the state of deep meditation when one is sunk in peace but still retains the consciousness of one's identity. One knows that one is meditating and can still consciously continue one's *Sadhana*.

In *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* one has attained to a state where the identity has been lost and sunk entirely in the highest Self. However long it may last it is only temporary, one must return eventually to one's normal state of consciousness. One is unable to function in this state and so long as it lasts one is in a state of trance. It is usually preliminary to the final state. But Bhagavan attained *Sahaja Samadhi* directly without any intermediate state. Many people consider that *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* is final, and once having attained it seek to progress no further.

Sahaja Samadhi is the final and most blessed state, the goal of all Yogis. In this state the individual has become completely merged in the Supreme Self. His identity which became lost in *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* has become enlarged and is now the Supreme Self and knows itself as such. Trances are no longer necessary, a person can still carry on with the ordinary day to day business but he no longer identifies himself with the activities, but watches them like a dreamer watching a dream. There is no more to do, and no more to be attained. This is the Supreme State of Absolute Bliss. But in the simple words of Bhagavan, it is the SELF and it can be realized by one and all by Self-enquiry.

He never asked us what had brought us to him, but what had brought us again to Arunachala. He had so completely identified himself with the Mountain. This answer, though caused by a mistake, was very gratifying to me, as Bhagavan admitted the old connection between us. So must I always be with him until Self-realization, after which there will be no more he and I. I used to say that I must attain Self-realization in this life or Bhagavan would have to be born again so that I might be with him. So for his own good he must see that I gain my end in this life. Bhagavan would just smile. Though this was only said as a joke, there was a fundamental truth behind it.

On another occasion I asked Bhagavan about suicide. I had been cycling round the Hill and on meeting a bus the thought had come into my head: "Why should I not concentrate on the Self and throw myself in front of the bus, so that in this way I may attain Moksha!" I told this to Bhagavan, but he said that it would not work. Thoughts would spring up involuntarily as I fell, fear and the shock would cause them, and thoughts coming, life would continue so that I would have to take another body. If I could still my mind sufficiently so that such a thing would not happen, then what was the need of suicide?

EPILOGUE

I cannot do better than conclude with an article I wrote for the celebration of Bhagavan's eightieth birthday which fell on December 17th 1959:

I feel that I should not let the occasion pass without saying a word to those who doubt the continued presence of our beloved Guru amongst us. Though we talk as though he were dead, he is indeed here and very much alive, as he promised, in spite of appearances.
Many will contend that his presence is in no way limited to this single spot, that he permeates everywhere and is to be found in the home of every devotee just as certainly as in his Ashram. But though I must admit the correctness of this view as a theory, in practice I find personally that it does not work out quite in this way.

Once Self-realization has been attained, all the world is the same for us; no spot can be selected as more congenial and powerful than another. Without doubt there are many who had the blessing of His

Grace and are Self-realized and live their lives always conscious of his beatific presence wherever they happen to be. And these can vouch for the truth that he is, in fact, to be found everywhere. But for others, like myself, less blessed beings, things are not quite so easy. For many of us find that the world, our families, business troubles, sickness and poverty absorb all our time and attention, so that we cannot even put in a few minutes a day for realizing that he *is* in truth everywhere and very much alive. For such, a visit to the Ashram acts as a refreshing draught and gives renewed zest to their Sadhana.

But people may say that I am hardly the one to judge fairly; I am prejudiced. So I will not restrict myself to my own experience, but rather to the witness of the many visitors who return here after some years of absence. "There is no point in going there," they had argued previously, "he is no longer there."

"Where has he gone?" one asks them. But they are vague in their reply, they haven't much faith that he is anywhere at all, one feels. In spite of this, something draws them back here, they don't really know what, and then those who will sit quiet for a while and try to forget for a few moments their little worries are amazed at the potency of the atmosphere.

Often visitors have remarked, "But one can feel him more strongly than ever. Of course one misses the physical presence, the opportunity to ask questions, the delight of his greeting, the humour of his approach, and most of all his understanding and sympathy."

Yes, one certainly misses all that, but one never doubts for a moment that he is still here, when once one has taken the trouble to visit his tomb.

"Propaganda!" you will retort, thinking that as I live here I have an axe to grind. But actually the truth is exactly the reverse. Everyone knows that I prefer to shut myself off and avoid visitors, so why should I now be so foolish as to encourage them if I did not feel compelled to do so by some force beyond my control?

But there is no need for me to speak. Rather let the Hindu scriptures bear their own witness.

It is distinctly stated in the Upanishads that the life-force of a *Brahmanishtha* never leaves his body, but inheres in the heart itself. If the *Samadhi* (tomb) is properly maintained and approached, it will confer inestimable bliss on the devotee, granting him boons. This view is supported by Tirumular's "*Tiru-mantram*", a Tamil classic, which states that the Jnani, whether in the embodied or disembodied state, is Brahman Himself and, as the Guru of all his children, personally takes care of them and blesses them. This authoritative work also proclaims the omnipresent character of the Jnani after giving up his body. Again, the Agamas state that, even if the *Brahmanishtha* has decided to cast off his coat and take up his abode elsewhere, he leaves in his old body one of his sixteen *kalas*, which is all powerful, to shed forth his blessing.

If it is felt that Sri Ramana is still actually in our midst and his presence is to be found most easily at the spot where he lived so long and his body is buried, surely this is only natural. Is it not the tradition

amongst all great religions of the world, with no exception? Even the Muslims revere the graves of accredited saints, while the Buddhists go on tiresome pilgrimages just to pay reverence to some relic. People do not take all this trouble unless they feel there is a very good reason.

When Sri Ramana lay dying, people went to him and begged him to remain for a while longer as they needed his help. His reply is well known.

“Go! Where can I go? I shall always be here.”

The power of Sri Ramana, who gave up his physical form has not diminished. He is everywhere, like the light in a room shed by an electric bulb. But the light is found to be far stronger near the bulb, the source of light, than in any other part of the room, though no spot is in darkness. What wonder, then, if the power of our Guru is found near the place where his body is interred?

There is no need for me to lay down the law, even though my personal experience can vouch for the truth of what I say. I am satisfied to rely on the words of the Scriptures. Or, if you prefer it, on your own testimony after you have visited the Ashram and found out for yourself.

And so I end the few personal reminiscences I have of my Guru. These are doubtless inadequate as I never thought that I should write anything, but my friends have been urging me on, telling me that it was my duty to put on record my experiences of Bhagavan. When I did eventually sit down to write, I found that it was easier than I had expected as I had often talked with others of the various incidents recorded here and in this way kept my memory green. I have mentioned as few names as possible, only when it seemed that the content required it. Personalities did not count before him. He was unique, for a Self-realized soul is a rarity and can be met only over long periods of time. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (VII. 3. Besant Trans.) Sri Krishna says:

“Among thousands of men scarce one striveth for Perfection; of the successful strivers scarce one knoweth Me in essence.”

ADVAITA BODHA DEEPIKA

[LAMP OF NON-DUAL KNOWLEDGE]

FOREWORD

Originally Sri Shankaracharya and other great Sages had written several works like the commentary on the *Vedanta Sutras* and thus furnished the methods for those engaged in Self-enquiry to accomplish their purpose.

From those, Sri Karapatra Swami later condensed the salient points into Sanskrit verse in a work of twelve chapters, called *Sri Advaita Bodha Deepika*. Still later, some great man seems to have translated this into Tamil prose. For some unknown reasons only some eight chapters of the same are found published. They are:

(1) *Adhyaropa* = Super-imposition.

(2) *Apavada* = Its removal.

(3) *Sadhana* = The means of accomplishment.

(4) *Sravana* = Hearing, reading, talking about God.

(5) *Manana* = Reflecting on sravana.

(6) *Vasanaksaya* = Annihilation of latencies.

(7) *Sakshatkara* = Direct Realisation.

(8) *Manolaya* = Extinction of the mind.

In this work the author has explained how Ignorance obscures the true nature of the Self which is non-dual only; how by its veiling aspect it covers It (the Self) with two effects - ‘that It does not exist’ and ‘that It does not shine forth’, how by its other aspect, in the shape of the mind, projecting individuals, *Iswara* and the world and presenting them as real, thus giving rise to illusion; how one fully qualified is alone fit to obtain this knowledge; how a bare scholar of the *sastras* cannot be fit; how enquiry is the chief means for knowledge; how this enquiry consists in hearing of, reflecting upon and contemplation of TRUTH, and *Samadhi*; how the indirect knowledge gained by hearing puts an end to the idea that ‘It does not exist’ and the direct knowledge gained by reflection, which means enquiry ‘WHO I AM’ and seeking within, destroys the wrong notion that ‘It does not shine forth’; how the knowledge of THOU in THAT THOU ART is identical with the knowledge of THAT; how by meditation the different latencies perishing which were the obstacles on the way and the mind which is the limiting adjunct *(upadhi)* of the individual perishes too and by the eventual unobstructed realisation of BRAHMAN (God) the Seeker becomes free from the bondage of the three kinds of *Karma* which form the cycle of births and deaths; how in truth there is neither bondage nor release for the SELF and in what way to extinguish the mind.

Thinking that this will be helpful to Seekers of Liberation Sri Ramanananda Saraswathi (formerly Munagala Venkataramiah) a devotee of Bhagavan has by the grace of Sri Ramana rendered into English the eight chapters of the work now available. The last four chapters, *Savikalpa Samadhi*, *Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Jivan Mukti,* and *Videha Mukti* not being found in Tamil, Telugu or Sanskrit

Mss., could not be translated into English. Information on the missing chapters is earnestly sought and will be gratefully acknowledged by the publisher.

Our grateful thanks are due to H. H. Smt. Shanta Devi Maharani of Baroda and H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore for sending us the original Sanskrit Mss. of this work from the State Libraries for Maharshi's consultation and return.

This book is one of the few esteemed by Sri Maharshi and this translation was thoroughly revised in His Presence. So we are encouraged to present this small volume to the public with full confidence that the reader will benefit by it.

PUBLISHER.

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श्रीरमणायनमई

ADVAITA BODHA DEEPIKA

OR

THE LAMP OF NON-DUAL KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTORY

1. I salute the holy feet of the Supreme Lord, the Refuge of all the universe, the One Means to kill the *samsara (*the cycle of births and deaths), the Eternal God Ganesa of elephant-face!

2. I meditate on the holy master known as Chidambara Brahman, the very being of the non-dual Supreme Self, Its very Bliss and the foremost *yogi* among men by whose light glance I, a fool blinded by the massive darkness of beginningless Ignorance, gained the precious jewel of *Jnana* (Wisdom)!

3. I meditate on that holy master, by contact with the dust of whose lotus-feet men are able easily to cross the shoreless ocean of *samsaraa,* as if it were only a span.

4-5. To those who are fitted (by all) their sins having been burnt off by austerities (practised) in several past births, their minds made pure, their intellects discriminating the real from the unreal, themselves indifferent to the pleasures of either this or the other world, their minds and senses under control, passions held down, actions given up as a worthless burden, faith firm and minds tranquil, eagerly seeking release from bondage, this work - SRI ADVAITA BODHA DEEPIKA - is presented in twelve short chapters.

6. Many different works on *Advaita* have already appeared from Masters of yore, like Sri Sankaracharya and Vidyaranya; yet as a fond parent loves to hear the broken words of the lisping child, so also good people with large hearts can read this work as well, imperfect as it may be.

CHAPTER I

ON SUPERIMPOSITION

7. Greatly afflicted by the three kinds of distress *(tapatraya),* intensely seeking release from bondage so as to be free from this painful existence, a disciple distinguished by long practice of the four-fold *sadhana,* approaches a worthy master and prays:

8-12. Lord, master, ocean of mercy, I surrender to you! Pray save me!

Master: Save you from what?

Disciple: From the fear of recurring births and deaths.

Master: Leave the *samsara* and fear not.

Disciple: Unable to cross this vast ocean of *samsara,* I fear recurring births and deaths. So I have surrendered to you. It is for you to save me!

Master: What can I do for you?

Disciple: Save me. I have no other refuge. Just as water is the only thing to put out the flames when the hair of one's head is on fire, so also a sage such as you are, is the sole refuge of people like me who are on fire from the three kinds of distress. You are free from the illusion of *samsara,* calm in mind and sunk deep in the incomparable Bliss of Brahman which is beginningless and endless. Certainly you can save this poor creature. Pray do!

Master: What is it to me if you suffer?

Disciple: Saints like you cannot bear to see others suffer, as a father his child. Motiveless is your love for all beings. You are the *Guru* common to all, the only boat to carry us across this ocean of *samsara.*

Master: Now, what makes you suffer?

Disciple: Bitten by the cruel serpent of painful *samsara,* I am dazed and I suffer. Master, pray save me from this burning hell and kindly tell me how I can be free.

13-17. *M.:* Well-said, my Son! You are intelligent and well-disciplined. There is no need to prove your competence to be a disciple. Your words clearly show that you are fit. Now look here, my child!

In the Supreme Self of Being-Knowledge-Bliss who can be the transmigrating being? How can this *samsara* be? What could have given rise to it? And how and whence can it arise itself? Being the non-dual Reality, how can you be deluded? With nothing separate in deep sleep, not having changed

in any manner, and having slept soundly and peacefully, a fool on waking shouts out "Alas, I am lost!" How can you, the changeless, formless, Supreme, Blissful Self shout forth "I transmigrate - I am miserable!" and so on? Truly there is neither birth nor death; no one to be born or to die; nothing of the kind!

D.: What does exist then?

M.: There exists only the beginningless, endless, non-dual, never-bound, ever-free, pure, aware, single, Supreme, Bliss-Knowledge.

18. *D.:* If so, tell me how this mighty massive delusion of *samsara* veils me in dense darkness like a mass of clouds in the rainy season.

19-20. *M.:* What can be said of the power of this Illusion (Maya)! As a man mistakes a post for a man, so also you mistake the non-dual, perfect Self for an individual. Being deluded you are miserable. But how does this illusion arise? Like a dream in sleep this false *samsara* appears in the illusion of ignorance which is itself unreal. Hence your mistake.

21-24. *D.*: What is this ignorance?

M.: Listen. In the body appears a phantom, the 'I-Conceit', to claim the body for itself and it is called *Jiva.* This *Jiva* always outward bent, taking the world to be real and himself to be the doer and experiencer of pleasures and pains, desirous of this and that, undiscriminating, not once remembering his true nature, nor enquiring "Who am I?, What is this world?", is but wandering in the *samsara* without knowing himself. Such forgetfulness of the Self is Ignorance.

25. *D.:* All the *sastras* proclaim that this *samsara* is the handiwork of *Maya* but you say it is of Ignorance. How are the two statements to be reconciled?

M.: This Ignorance is called by different names such *as Maya, Pradhana, Avyakta* (the unmanifest), *Avidya,* Nature, Darkness and so on. Therefore the *samsara* is but the result of Ignorance.

26. *D.: How* does this Ignorance project the *samsara?*

M.: Ignorance has two aspects: Veiling and Projection (*Avarana - Viksepa).* From these arises the *samsara.* Veiling functions in two ways. In the one we say "It is not" and in the other "It does not shine forth."

27-28. *D.:* Please explain this.

M.: In a discourse between a master and a student, although the sage teaches that there is only the non-dual Reality the ignorant man thinks "What can be non-dual Reality? No. It cannot be." As a result of beginningless veiling, though taught, the teaching is disregarded and the old ideas persist. Such indifference is the first aspect of veiling.

29-30. Next, with the help of sacred books and gracious masters he unaccountably but sincerely believes in the non-dual Real, yet he cannot probe deep but remains superficial and says "The Reality does not shine forth." Here is knowledge knowing that It does not shine forth yet the illusion of ignorance persists. This illusion that It does not shine forth, is the second aspect of veiling.

CHAPTER II

APAVADA

THE REMOVAL OF SUPERIMPOSITION

1. *D.:* Master, Ignorance is said to have no beginning; it follows that it will have no end. How can the beginningless Ignorance be dispelled? Being the ocean of mercy you can please tell me this.

2. *M.*: Yes, my child; you are intelligent and can understand subtle things. You have said right. Truly Ignorance has no beginning, but it has an end. It is said that the rise of knowledge is the end of Ignorance. Just as the sunrise dispels the darkness of night so also the light of knowledge dispels the darkness of Ignorance.

3-4. To avoid confusion, everything in the world can be considered by analysing its individual characteristics under the categories: cause, nature, effect, limit and fruit. But the transcendental Reality being non-dual is beyond all these whereas all else, from *Maya* onwards, being wrongly seen on It, are subject to the above analysis.

5. Of these, *Maya* has no antecedent cause because it is not the product of anything preceding it, but remains in Brahman, self-evident and without beginning. Before creation there could be no cause for its manifestation, yet it manifests and it must be by itself.
6. *D.:* Is there any authority for this statement?

M.: Yes, Vasishta's words. He says: Just as bubbles spontaneously arise in water so also the power to manifest names and forms rose up from the all-powerful and perfect transcendental Self.

7-9. *D.*: *Maya* cannot but have a cause. Just as clay cannot become a pot without the agency of a potter so also the Power all along remaining unmanifest in Brahman can manifest only with *Isvara's* will.

M.: In dissolution there remains only the non-dual Brahman and no *Isvara*. Clearly there cannot be His will. When it is said that in dissolution all are withdrawn from manifestation and remain unmanifest, it means that the *jivas,* all the universe, and *Isvara* have all become unmanifest. The unmanifest *Isvara* cannot exercise His will. What happens is this : just as the dormant power of sleep displays itself as dream, so also the dormant power of *Maya* displays itself as this plurality, consisting of *Isvara*, His will, the universe and the *jivas*. *Isvara* is thus the product of *Maya* and He cannot be the origin of His origin. *Maya* therefore has no antecedent cause. In dissolution there remains only Pure Being devoid of will, and admitting of no change. In creation *Maya* hitherto remaining unmanifest in this Pure Being, shines forth as the mind. By the play of mind, plurality appears as *Isvara*, the worlds and the *Jivas,* like magic. *Maya* manifest is creation, and *Maya* unmanifest is dissolution. Thus of its

own accord, *Maya* appears or withdraws itself and has thus no beginning. Therefore we say there was no antecedent cause for it.

18-20. *D.:* What is the ‘effect’ of *Maya*?

M.: It consists in presenting the illusion of the *jiva, Isvara* and *jagrat* on the non-dual substratum of Brahman, by virtue of its veiling and projecting powers.

D.: How?

M.: As soon as the power laying dormant shows forth as mind, the latencies of the mind sprout forth and grow up like trees which together form the universe. The mind sports with its latencies; they rise up as thoughts and materialise as this universe, which is thus only a dream vision. The *jivas* and *Isvara* being its contents are as illusory as this day-dream.

D.: Please explain their illusory character.

M.: The world is an object and seen as the result of the sport of mind. The *jivas* and *Isvara* are contained in it. Parts can be only as real as the whole. Suppose the universe is painted in colours on a wall. The *jivas* and *Isvara* will be figures in the painting. The figures can be only as real as the painting itself.

30-32. *D.:* What is the limit of *Maya*?

M.: It is the knowledge resulting from an enquiry into the sense of the *Mahavakya.* Because *Maya* is Ignorance, and Ignorance subsists on non-enquiry. When non-enquiry gives place to enquiry, right knowledge results and puts an end to Ignorance.

Now listen. Ailments in the body are the results of past *karma;* they subsist on wrong diet and increase with its continuation. Or, the ignorance of rope, so long as it is not enquired into, projects a snake into view and other hallucinations follow in its wake. In the same manner although *Maya* is self-evident, beginningless and spontaneous, yet it subsists in the absence of enquiry into the nature of the Self, manifests the universe etc., and grows more massive.

33-35. With the rise of enquiry, *Maya* hitherto grown strong by its absence, loses its nourishment and gradually withers away with all its effects, namely the *jagrat* etc. Just as in the absence of enquiry the ignorance factor of rope made it look a snake but suddenly disappeared with the rise of enquiry, so also *maya* flourishes in ignorance and disappears with the rise of enquiry. Just as the rope-snake and the power which produces this illusion persist before enquiry, but after enquiry end in simple rope, so also *Maya* and its effect, the *jagrat,* persist before enquiry, but end in pure Brahman afterwards.

36-38. *D.:* How can a single thing appear in two different ways?

M.: Brahman, the non-dual Pure-Being, presents itself as the *jagrat* before enquiry, and shows Itself in Its true form after enquiry.

See how before proper consideration clay appears a pot and afterwards as clay only; or gold appears

as ornaments and then is found to be only gold. Similarly with Brahman too. After enquiry Brahman is realised to be unitary, non-dual, impartite, and unchanged in the past, present or future. In It there is nothing like *Maya*, or its effect, such as the *jagrat.* This realisation is known as the Supreme Knowledge and the limit of Ignorance. Thus is described the 'limit' of *Maya*.

39. *D.:* What is the 'fruit' of *Maya*?

M.: That it fruitlessly vanishes into nothing, is its fruit. A hare's horn is mere sound having no significance. So it is with *Maya*, mere sound without any meaning. Realised sages have found it so.

CHAPTER III

SADHANA

THE MEANS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

1. To the question "How can there be *samsara* for the Supreme Self of Being-Knowledge-Bliss?", the sages answer "When unmanifest, the power of the Self is called *Maya*, and when manifest, the same is mind. This mode of *Maya*, the inscrutable Mind, is the sprout of *samsara* for the self".

D.: Who has said that mind is indescribable?

2-3. *M.:* Vasishta has said to Rama. In the non-dual Consciousness the *bhava* which, different from knowledge that is real and different from insentience that is unreal, tending to create, projects the latencies as this thing and that thing, mixes together the conscious and unconscious, and makes them appear under the categories, "the sentient" and "the insentient", itself of the nature of both the sentient and insentient; always vacillating and changeful is mind. Therefore it is indescribable.

4. Though itself unchanging, the Supreme Self associated with the wrongly superimposed mind, appears to be changeful.

D.: How is that?

M.: Just as a Brahmin who is drunk, behaves strangely when in the power of liquors, so too the Self though unchanged by nature, associated now with mind, appears changed as the *jiva* wallowing in this *samsara.* Hence, the Self's *samsara* is not other than mind. The *srutis* say so.

5. Mind being the *samsara,* must be investigated. Associated with mind which according to its modes assumes the shapes of objects, the man seems to undergo the same changes. This eternal secret is disclosed in the *Maitrayinrya Upanishad*. This also is confirmed by our experience and by positive and negative induction.

6-7. *D.:* How is it confirmed by our experience?

M.: When in deep sleep the mind lies quiescent, the Self remains without change and without

⇦

samsara. When in dream and waking, the mind manifests, the Self seems changed and caught up in the *samsara.* Everyone knows it by experience. It is evident from *sruti, smriti,* logic and experience that this *samsara* is nothing but mind itself. How can any one dispute this point which is so obvious?

29-30. *D.:* How can the mind be made still?

M.: Only by *Sankhya. Sankhya* is the process of enquiry coupled with knowledge. The realised sages declare that the mind has its root in non-enquiry and perishes by an informed enquiry.

D.: Please explain this process.

M.: This consists of *sravana, manana, nididhyasana* and *samadhi, i.e.*, hearing, reasoning, meditation and Blissful Peace, as mentioned in the scriptures. Only this can make the mind still.

31-32. There is also an alternative. It is said to be *yoga.*

D.: What is *yoga?*

M.: Meditation on Pure Being free from qualities.

D.: Where is this alternative mentioned and how?

M.: In the *Gita*, Sri Bhagavan Krishna has said: What is gained by *Sankhya* can also be gained by *yoga.* Only he who knows that the result of the two processes is the same, can be called a realised sage.

33-34. *D.:* How can the two results be identical?

M.: The final 'limit' is the same for both because both of them end in stillness of mind. This is *samadhi* or Blissful Peace. The 'fruit' of *samadhi* is Supreme Knowledge; this remains the same by whichever process gained.

D.: If the 'fruit' is the same for both, the final purpose can be served by only one of them. Why should two processes be mentioned instead of only one?

M.: In the world, seekers of truth are of different grades of development. Out of consideration for them, Sri Bhagavan has mentioned these two in order to offer a choice.

35. *D.:* Who is fit for the path of enquiry *(Sankhya)?*

M.: Only a fully qualified seeker is fit, for he can succeed in it and not others.

36-37. D.: What are the *sadhanas* or requisites for this process?

M.: The knowers say that the *sadhanas* consist of an ability to discern the real from the unreal, no desire for pleasures here or hereafter, cessation of activities *(karma)* and a keen desire to be liberated. Not qualified with *all these four* qualities, however hard one may try, one cannot succeed in enquiry.

Therefore this fourfold *sadhana* is the *sine qua non* for enquiry.

38. To begin with, a knowledge of the distinctive characteristics of these *sadhanas* is necessary. As already pointed out, these distinctive characteristics are of the categories (हेतु, स्वभाव, कार्य, अवधि, फल) cause, nature, effect limit and fruit. These are now described.

39-44. Discernment *(viveka)* can arise only in a purified mind. Its 'nature' is the conviction gained by the help of sacred teachings that only Brahman is real and all else false. Always to remember this truth is its 'effect'. Its end *(avadhi)* is to be settled unwavering in the truth that only Brahman is and all else is unreal. Desirelessness *(vairagya)* is the result of the outlook that the world is essentially faulty. Its 'nature' is to renounce the world and have no desire for anything in it. Its 'effect' is to turn away in disgust from all enjoyments as from vomit. It ends *(avadhi)* in treatment with contempt of all pleasures, earthly or heavenly, as if they were vomit or burning fire or hell.

Cessation of activities *(uparati)* can be the outcome of the eight-fold *yoga (astangayoga),* namely, *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi, i.e.*, self-restraint, discipline, steady posture, control of breath, control of senses, mind collected to truth, meditation and peace. Its 'nature' consists in restraining the mind. Its 'effect' is to cease from worldly activities. It ends *(avadhi)* in forgetfulness of the world as if in sleep, owing to the ending of activities. Desire to be liberated *(mumuksutva)* begins with the association with realised sages. Its 'nature' is the yearning for liberation. Its 'effect' is to stay with one's master. It ends *(avadhi)* in giving up all study of *sastras* and performance of religious rites.

When these have reached their limits as mentioned above, the *sadhanas* are said to be perfect.

131-133. Similarly by enquiry, the mind readily gains peace and *samadhi.*

D.: What is this enquiry?

M.: After hearing from the *Guru* about the nature of the Self which in the *sastras* is spoken of as Brahman or Being-Knowledge-Bliss, to gain a clear indirect knowledge, then according to *upadesa* and by intelligent reasoning to enquire and find out the Self which is Pure Knowledge, and the non-self which is objective and insentient like the ego, to discern and sift them, then directly to experience them as different from each other, later on by meditation to extinguish all that is objective, *and to absorb into the Self the residual mind left over as non-dual,* ends in the direct experience of Supreme Bliss.

Here it has been described in brief, but the *sastras* deal with it elaborately.

134. This chapter on *Sadhana* has dealt with these two means, Enquiry and *Yoga,* for making the mind still. According to his merits an intelligent seeker should practise either of them.

135. This Chapter is meant for the earnest student in order that he may study carefully and analyse his qualifications to ascertain what he already has and what more are wanted After properly equipping himself he can find out which of these two methods suits him and then practise it till success.

CHAPTER IV

SRAVANA

HEARING

1. In the foregoing chapter we had seen that *yoga* is suited to the lower grade of seekers and enquiry to the higher. In this chapter we shall consider the path of enquiry which effortlessly leads to Knowledge of Brahman.

2-4. *D.:* What is this path of enquiry?

M.: From the *sastras* it is well-known to consist of *sravana, manana, nidhidhyasana* and *samadhi i.e.*, hearing the Truth, reflection, meditation and Blissful Peace. The *Vedas* themselves declare it to be so. "My dear, the Self must be heard from the master, reflected and meditated upon." In another place it is said that in Blissful Peace the Self must be realised. The same idea has been repeated by Lord Sri Sankaracharya in his *Vakyavrtti,* namely that until the meaning of the sacred text "I am Brahman" is realised in all its true significance, one must be practising *sravana* etc.

5-7. In *Chitra Deepika,* Sri Vidyaranyaswami has said that enquiry is the means of knowledge and it consists in hearing the Truth, reflection and meditation; only the state of blissful Peace of awareness in which Brahman alone exists and nothing else, is the true 'nature' of Knowledge; the non-revival of the knot of the ego parading as 'I' which has been lost once for all, is its 'effect'; always to remain fixed as 'I am the Supreme Self' just as strongly, unequivocally and unerringly as the heretofore ignorant identification "I am the body" is its 'end'; liberation is its 'fruit'. From this it follows that only hearing etc. is the enquiry into the Self.

8-10. To hear the Supreme Truth, reflect and meditate on it, and to remain in *Samadhi* form together the enquiry into the Self. They have for their 'cause' *(Hetu)* the aforesaid four *sadhanas,* namely, discernment, desirelessness, tranquillity and desire to be liberated. Which of these is essential for which part of enquiry will be mentioned in its appropriate place. Here we shall deal with *sravana.*

M.: Sravana consists in ascertaining, by means of the six proofs considered together, that the *Vedas* aim at the non-dual Brahman only.

11-12. To analyse *sravana* under the five categories: Intense desire to be liberated gives rise to it; always to be hearing of the non-dual Brahman is its 'nature'; the complete removal of that aspect of the veiling power of Ignorance which says, "It (Brahman) does not exist" is its 'effect'; non-recurrence of this veiling power is its 'limit'; a firm indirect knowledge is its 'fruit'.

13. *D.:* How can the desire to be liberated be said to be its 'cause'?

M.: In the *sruti* it is said, "In the state of dissolution before creation there was only the non-dual Reality." This Reality is the same as the Self. Only he who is eager to be liberated will seek the

knowledge of the Self and take to hearing it. No other is interested in It. Therefore eagerness to be liberated is the essential requisite for this part of enquiry, namely *sravana.*

14. *D.:* Just now you said that always to be hearing of the non-dual Self is the 'nature' of *sravana.* Who is this non-dual Self?

M.: He is famous in the *srutis* as the Consciousness beyond the gross, subtle and causal bodies, apart from the five sheaths and witness of the waking, dream and sleep states.

CHAPTER V

MANANA

REFLECTION

1. *D.:* Master, on hearing it from you, the nature of the Self is now clear to me, but the knowledge remains only indirect. Kindly instruct me in reflection, by practising which the darkness of Ignorance now hiding the Self may vanish and direct experience result.

2. *M.:* Always to direct the thought with subtle reasoning upon the non-dual Self that is now known indirectly, is called reflection.

3-4. *D.:* Please tell me its 'cause', 'nature', 'effect', 'limit' and 'fruit'.

M.: Discernment of the real from the unreal is its 'cause'; enquiry into the Truth of the non-dual Self is its 'nature'; to tear off that veiling aspect of Ignorance which makes one say: "It does not shine forth" is its 'effect'; the non recrudescence of this veiling is its 'limit'; and direct experience is its 'fruit'. So say the sages.

D.: Why is discernment said to be its 'cause'?

M.: Only he who, by discernment of the real from the unreal has acquired indirect knowledge, is fit to seek by enquiry the direct knowledge of experience. No other can succeed in the search for it.

6. *D.:* Why should not the Desire for Liberation be the 'cause' of reflection?

M.: A mere desire to be Liberated cannot make a man fit for enquiry into the Self. Without *sravana* one cannot have even an indirect knowledge. How can one succeed in one's enquiry? Only after knowing the nature of the Self, should one proceed to seek It. Ignorant of Its true nature, how can one investigate the Self? Simple desire to be liberated will not suffice.

7. *D.:* Should not this desire lead to enquiry? With the rise of this desire the man will begin to hear about the nature of the Self and gain indirect knowledge which must enable him to undertake the enquiry.

M.: This amounts to saying that the seeker possesses discernment. He is not only desirous of Liberation but also discerning in intellect. With *sravana* comes this faculty of intellectual discernment of the real from the unreal, or the Self from the non-self. This is called indirect knowledge. The *sastras* say that only he who possesses indirect knowledge can discern the real or the Self from the unreal or the non-self, and is fit for enquiry into the Self. Therefore discernment is the *sine-qua-non* for enquiry.

8-12. *D.:* Even if the desire for Liberation be not the particular (*visesha*) cause of Reflection, could not either desirelessness or tranquillity be the cause of it?

M.: All these are only general aids for reflection but not its particular causes. A desireless and tranquil man need not necessarily have the indirect knowledge of the Self and is therefore unfit for enquiry into the Self. There are men of austerities who are desireless and tranquil but not anxious for Liberation. Having no desire for Liberation they have not heard at all about the Self.

D.: How can they be said not to be desirous of Liberation?

M.: Inasmuch as they engage in austerities without taking to *sravana* etc., which is the only gateway to Liberation, the absence of the desire for Liberation is inferred.

D.: No, they too can be desirous of being Liberated.

M.: If so, they must give up their austerities, always remain with a master and engage themselves in hearing of the Self. If it be said that they have already done *sravana* also, then since they will have gained indirect knowledge, they should be engaged in reflection. Not having done *sravana*, though endowed with desirelessness and tranquillity, they are incapable of discerning the real from the unreal and therefore unfit for enquiry into the Self. Desirelessness etc., can only be aids to this enquiry but not its chief causes. Discernment of the real from the unreal is the only chief cause.

13-14. *D.:* Can the Self not be realised by austerities accompanied by desirelessness and tranquillity, without enquiry?

M.: No. By non-enquiry the Self has been lost sight of; to regain It enquiry is needed. In its absence how can even *crores* of austerities restore the sight? Always to enquire into the Self is the only remedy for the blindness of the ignorant whose mental eye has been bedimmed by the darkness of non-enquiry spreading its veil. Unless by the eye of knowledge gained through enquiry, the Self cannot be realised.

15-16. *D.:* What is this enquiry into the Self?

M.: With one-pointed intellect to seek within the five sheaths the Self which is shining forth as 'I' in the body, senses, etc., considering "who is this Self?, where is It? and how is It?", is the nature of the enquiry into the Self. With subtle intellect the enquiry into the Reality, namely the Self within the unreal sheaths must always be pursued.

CHAPTER VI

VASANAKSAYA

THE ANNIHILATION OF LATENCIES

1. This chapter succeeds the five earlier ones on Superimposition, its withdrawal, the requisites of the seeker, hearing, and reflection. To the disciple who after reflecting on the Self has gained direct knowledge, the master further says as follows:

2. Wise son, the *sastras* have nothing more to teach you; you have finished with them. Henceforth you must meditate on the Self. The Scriptures say: 'Dear! the Self must be heard of, reflected and meditated upon'. Having finished reflection, you must proceed with meditation. Now give up the *sastras*.

3 - 6. *D.:* Is it proper to give them up?

M.: Yes, it is proper. Now that by enquiry you have known what need be known, you can unhesitatingly give them up.

D.: But the *sastras* say that to the last moment of death, one should not give them up.

M.: Their purpose is to teach the truth. After it is gained, of what further use can they be? A further study will be so much waste of time and labour. Therefore leave them aside. Take to unbroken meditation.

D.: Is this statement supported by scriptures?

M.: Yes.

D.: How?

M.: They say: After repeatedly hearing from the master about the Self, reflecting on It and directly knowing It, the seeker should give up the *sastras* even as the pole used to stir up the corpse in the burning ground is finally consigned to the burning fire of the corpse. From a study of the *sastras* let the seeker of Liberation gather an indirect knowledge of the Self and put it into practice by reflecting on It until by experiencing It a direct knowledge is gained; later, like a gatherer of grains who takes the grain and rejects the chaff, let him leave the *sastras* aside. The man desirous of liberation should make use of *sastras* only to gain knowledge of the Self and then proceed to reflect on It; he should not be simply talking *vedanta*, nor even be thinking of it. For talk results only in so much strain on speech; similarly thinking, on the mind; no useful purpose can be served by either. Therefore only know just what need be known and give up tiresome study. Controlling his speech and mind a sensible seeker should always engage in meditation. This is the teaching of the *sastras*.

7. Wise son, now that you have known what need be known from them, you should efface the impressions left by your studies.

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D.: What constitutes these impressions?

M.: It is the inclination of the mind always to study *vedantic* literature, to understand the meanings of the texts, to commit them to memory and constantly be thinking of them. Since this inclination obstructs meditation, a wise man must overcome it with every effort. Next the latencies connected with the world (*lokavasana*) must be eliminated.

8. *D.:* What are these latencies?

M.: To think, this is my country, this is my family pedigree and this is the tradition. Should any one praise or censure any of these, the reactions of the mind denote the latencies connected with the world. Give them up. Later on, give up the latencies connected with the body also (*dehavasana*).

9 -13. *D.:* What are they?

M.: To think oneself to be of such and such age, young or old and desire the full span of life with health, strength and good looks. Generally thoughts pertaining to the body indicate these latencies. Ambition in the world and love for body distract the mind and prevent meditation on Brahman. Since all objects are ephemeral, they must be eschewed. Then the latencies connected with enjoyments (*bhogavasana*) must be given up.

D.: What are these?

M.: These are made up of thoughts like : this is good and I must have it; this is not so and let it leave me; now I have gained so much and let me gain more, and so on.

D.: How can this be overcome?

M.: By looking with disgust upon all enjoyments as on vomit or excreta and developing dispassion for them, this can be overcome. Dispassion is the only remedy for this mad craving. After this, the mind must be cleared of the six passions, namely, lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy.

D.: How can this be done?

M.: By (*maitri, karuna, mudita and upekssha*) friendship with the holy, compassion for the afflicted, rejoicing in the joy of the virtuous and being indifferent to the shortcomings of the sinful.

Next must be effaced the latencies connected with the objects of the senses (*vishayavasana*) such as sound etc. These latencies are the running of the senses such as hearing etc., after their objects.

D.: How can these latencies be effaced?

M.: By a practice of the six-fold discipline consisting of *sama, dama, uparati, titiksha, samadhana* and *sraddha*., withdrawing the mind from going outwards, controlling the senses, not thinking of the objects of the senses, forbearance, fixing the mind on the Reality and faith.

Next all latencies connected with mutual attachments must be overcome.

CHAPTER VII

SAKSATKARA

REALISATION

1. In the foregoing chapter it was said that direct knowledge must first be gained and then the latent tendencies of the mind wiped out so that Brahman may be realised. Now Realisation is dealt with.

The master says : Wise son, now that you have gained direct knowledge by enquiry into the Self, you should proceed with meditation.

2. *D.:* Master, now that I have gained direct knowledge by enquiry and my task is finished why should I meditate further and to what end?

3-4. *M.:* Though by reflection, direct knowledge of the Self has been gained, Brahman cannot be realised without meditation. In order to experience 'I am Brahman' you must practise meditation.

5-6.: *D.:* You ask me to pursue meditation for realising Brahman. I have already gained direct knowledge by enquiry into the Sacred text. Why should I now practise meditation?

M.: If you mean to say that enquiry into the sacred text results in realising Brahman, who can deny it? No one. Truly this enquiry must end in the realisation of Brahman.
Let us now enquire into the meaning of the text. Whose identity with whom is implied in it? It must be of the consciousness witnessing the five sheaths of the individual, the implied meaning of 'thou', with Brahman, the implied meaning of 'That', it cannot be of the *Jiva*, *i.e.*, the personal soul with Brahman. By enquiry the identity of the witnessing consciousness with Brahman has certainly been found. Of what use can this identity of the witness with Brahman be to you?

7. *D.:* On enquiry into the meaning of the Sacred text, when one has realised that the witness is Brahman and *vice versa*, how can you raise the question 'Of what use can it be to the person?' Its use is evident. Formerly the seeker was ignorant of the identity and now by enquiry he is aware of it.

M.: By enquiry you have certainly known that the witness is Brahman and that the unbroken, all-perfect Brahman is the witness. Still this knowledge is not the end and cannot serve your purpose. Suppose a poor beggar who was ignorant of the fact that a king resident in a fort was the emperor of the world, later knew it. How does this newly acquired knowledge improve his position? It cannot serve any useful purpose for him.

8. *D.:* Before enquiry, ignorance prevails. After enquiry, knowledge is gained that the witness is

Brahman. Now knowledge has taken the place of ignorance. This is the use.

M.: How does this affect the fact? Whether you have known it or not, the witness ever remains Brahman. Your knowledge of the fact has not made Brahman of the witness. Whether the poor beggar knew it or not, the king in the fort was the emperor. His knowledge did not make an emperor of the king in the fort. Now that you have known the witness to be Brahman, what has happened to you? Tell me. There can be no change in you.

9. *D.:* Why not? There is a difference. The sacred text teaches 'That thou art'. On enquiring into its significance I have found that the witness of the five sheaths in me is the same as Brahman. From this I have known that I am Brahman, which forms another sacred text. To me who was ignorant of the witness being the same as Brahman, this knowledge has dawned, with the result that I have realised Brahman.

M.: How can you claim to have realised Brahman? If by the text 'I am Brahman' you understand yourself to be Brahman, who is this 'I' but the *Jiva*, the personal soul or the ego? How can the ego be Brahman? Just as even with his knowledge of the king, the beggar cannot himself be the king, so also the changeful ego can never be identical with the changeless Brahman.

10-14. *D.:* Certainly so. But on enquiring 'Who am I?' it becomes plain that by non-enquiry the unchanging witness had mistaken the changing ego for himself. Now he knows 'I am not the changing ego but remain its unchanging conscious witness'. Now it is but right that the witness should say, 'I am Brahman'. What can be discordant in this?

M.: How can you hold that the witness says 'I am Brahman?' Does the unchanging witness or the changing ego say it? If you say that it is the witness, you are wrong. For the witness remains unchanging as the witness of the I-conceit. He is not the conceit itself. Otherwise he cannot have the quality of being the witness for he will himself be changing. Being unchanging the witness is free from the least trace of any notion such as 'I' or Brahman and cannot therefore know 'I am Brahman'. There is no ground for your contention that the witness says so.

D.: Then who knows 'I am Brahman'?

M.: From what has been said before, it must follow that the individual soul, the *jiva*, or the I-conceit must have this knowledge.

D.: How does this follow?

M.: In order to be free from the repeated cycle of births and deaths, the ignorant man is obliged to practise the knowledge 'I am Brahman'. There is no ignorance for the witness. When there is no ignorance, there can be no knowledge either. Only the ignorant must seek knowledge. Who but the I-conceit can be the subject of ignorance or of knowledge? It is self-evident that the witnessing Self being the substratum on which knowledge or ignorance appears, must itself be free from them. On the contrary the I-conceit is known to possess knowledge or ignorance. For ask him 'Do you know the Self witnessing you?' And he will answer 'Who is that witness? I do not know him'. Here the ignorance of the I-conceit is obvious.

On hearing the *vedanta* that there is an inner witness to him, indirectly he knows that the Self is his witness. Then enquiring into the Self, the veil of Ignorance that It does not shine forth, is drawn off and directly he knows the witnessing Self. Here again the knowledge of the I-conceit is also clear.

It is only the *jiva* and not the witness who has the knowledge or ignorance that there is, or is not, the inner witness. You must now admit that the *jiva* has the knowledge that 'I am Brahman'. Now for the reason that the changing *Jiva* has become aware of the unchanging witness, he cannot be the same as the witness. Because he had seen him, the poor beggar cannot be the king. So also the changing *Jiva* cannot be the witness. Without being the witnessing Self, the changing entity cannot be Brahman. So this experience 'I am Brahman' is impossible.

CHAPTER VIII

MANONASHA

THE EXTINCTION OF THE MIND

1. In the previous chapter, having taught the realisation of the non-dual Brahman, the master now treats of the extinction of the mind as the sole means of realising Brahman.

M.: Wise son, leave off the mind which is limiting adjunct giving rise to individuality, thus causing the great malady of repeated births and deaths, and realise Brahman.

2. *D.:* Master, how can the mind be extinguished? Is it not very hard to do so? Is not the mind very powerful, restive and ever vacillating? How can one relinquish the mind?

3-4. *M.:* To give up the mind is very easy, as easy as crushing a delicate flower, or removing a hair from butter or winking your eyes. Doubt it not. For a self-possessed resolute seeker not bewitched by the senses, but by strong dispassion grown indifferent to external objects, there cannot be the least difficulty in giving up the mind.

D.: How is it so easy?

M.: The question of difficulty arises only if there is a mind to leave off. Truly speaking, there is no mind. When told 'There is a ghost here' an ignorant child is deluded into believing the existence of the non-existent ghost, and is subject to fear, misery and troubles, similarly in the untainted Brahman by fancying things that are not, as this and that, a false entity known as the *mind* arises seemingly real, functioning as this and that, and proving uncontrollable and mighty to the unwary, whereas to the self-possessed, discerning seeker who knows its nature, it is easy to relinquish. Only a fool ignorant of its nature says it is most difficult.

5-10. *D.:* What is the nature of mind?

M.: To think this and that. In the absence of thought, there can be no mind. On the thoughts being extinguished the mind will remain only in name like the horn of a hare; it will vanish as a non-entity like a barren woman's son, or a hare's horn, or a flower in the sky. This is also mentioned in the *Yoga Vasishta*.

D.: How?

M.: Vasishta says : 'Listen, O Rama, there is nothing to speak of as *mind*. Just as the ether exists

without form, so also the mind exists as the blank insentience. It remains only in name; it has no form. It is not outside, nor is it in the heart. Yet like the ether, the mind though formless fills all'.

D.: How can this be?

M.: Wherever thought arises as this and that, there is the mind.

D.: If there be mind wherever there is thought, are thought and mind different?

M.: Thought is the index of the mind. When a thought arises mind is inferred. In the absence of thought, there can be no mind. Therefore mind is nothing but thought. Thought is itself mind.

D.: What is 'thought'?

M.: Thought is imagination. The thought-free state is Bliss Supreme (*Shivasvarupa*). Thoughts are of two kinds; the recalling of things experienced, and unexperienced.

11. *D.:* To begin with, please tell me what is 'thought'.

M.: Sages say that it is nothing but to think of any external object as this or that, is or is not, this-wise or that-wise, etc.

12-13. *D.:* How is this to be classified under the heads of things experienced and unexperienced?

M.: Of objects of senses, such as sound, already experienced as 'I saw - I heard - I touched etc.' to think of them as having been seen, heard, touched is the recollection of things already experienced. To call to mind unexperienced objects of senses is the thought of unexperienced things.

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At the Feet of Bhagavan

Leaves from the Diary of
T. K. Sundaresa Iyer

Edited by Duncan Greenless
Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary Offering, 1980

PREFACE

It is my proud privilege to write about my teacher, Sri T. K. Sundaresa Iyer. He was not only a *bhakta* of the highest order but also an erudite scholar, though he did not possess any academic qualifications. His knowledge of English, Sanskrit and of course Tamil, was vast and deep. Added to these, Sri T. K. S., as he was addressed affectionately by all, acted as an interpreter to English-speaking visitors in their conversations with Sri Bhagavan. He also replied to correspondence received by the Ashram on spiritual matters, consulting Sri Bhagavan every time he had to reply to specific spiritual questions. Thus he acquired a full and comprehensive knowledge of Sri Bhagavan's teachings which have been incorporated in this book. His reminiscences of the Master portray the beauty, tenderness and compassion of Sri Bhagavan's personality. The narration of Sri Bhagavan taking care of the cracked egg is, perhaps, the standing example for this. His language is simple but in content its richness does not lag behind any similar spiritual literature.

He has helped many seekers, including myself, in clarifying the path of Ramana. There are still many who unhesitatingly express their deep debt to Sri. T. K. S. for their spiritual maturity. I can, without hesitation, affirm that he was not only a Rishi in appearance but also in experience.

September 1, 1980
Holy day of Sri Bhagavan's Advent at Arunachala
Sri Ramanasramam

V. Ganesan
Managing Editor
The Mountain Path

PART ONE

Guru's Grace

1. Introduction - 'A Lifetime with Bhagavan'

One day I wondered why I was visiting him at all. What was the use? There seemed to be no inner advancement. Going up the hill was meaningless toil. I decided to end my visits on the hill. For one hundred days exactly I did not see Bhagavan. On the hundred and first day I could suffer no longer and I ran to Skandasramam, above Virupaksha Cave. Bhagavan saw me climbing, got up and came forward to meet me. When I fell at his feet, I could not restrain myself and burst into tears. I clung to them and would not get up. Bhagavan pulled me up and asked: "It is over three months since I saw you. Where

were you?'' I told him how I thought that seeing him was of no use. "All right,'' he said, "maybe it is of no use, so what? You felt the loss, did you not?'' Then I understood that we did not go to him for profit, but because away from him there was no life for us.

Whenever I went up the hill to see Bhagavan, I used to buy something to eat and take it with me as an offering. One day I had no money. I stood before Bhagavan in a dejected mood and said: "This poor man has brought nothing.'' Bhagavan looked at me enquiringly and remarked: "Why you brought the main thing. All else is unimportant.'' I wondered, not knowing what I brought. "Don't you understand? You brought yourself,'' laughed Bhagavan.

PART TWO

Reminiscences

(4) Sri Ramana gives Rama Darsan

In May 1933, on my 36th birthday, after the usual bath and prayers, I sat in Sri Bhagavan's presence in a pensive mood. I addressed a prayer in the Tamil Viruttam style to Sri Bhagavan, complaining: "O Bhagavan, I have completed three and half decades, and yet have not had the experience of the real You. Pray let me have this day the touch of Your Grace.'' Handing over this slip of paper I prostrated to Him.

Bhagavan bade me sit down and gazed steadily at me; I was still in a pensive and meditative mood. All of a sudden I lost body-consciousness, and was absorbed in Sri Maharshi. I was turned inward, and the voice of Sri Bhagavan bade me see whatever I desired. I felt that if I could have the *darshan* of Sri Rama my life would have been fruitful, as I was very much devoted to Sri Rama. I had then immediately a *darshan* of Sri Rama, with Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrugna and Hanuman. The ecstasy of the vision defied description; I simply sat on, with Maharshi perhaps gazing on me without my being aware of His gaze. Two hours may thus have passed in pin-drop silence, lost in the vision, until it vanished. I prostrated at the feet of Sri Maharshi, with tears of ecstasy in my eyes and my hairs standing on end. To Bhagavan's enquiry I replied that I of course had seen my dear Rama.

(7) Introduction to the Collected Works

It was about 1927 when Sri Bhagavan's *Nool Thirattu* in Tamil was under preparation to be published. At about 10-30 in the night, as I was passing beside the Hall, Sri Bhagavan looked at me and said, "Why not you write the preface yourself?'' I was taken aback at His proposal, but meekly said, "I would venture to write it only if I had Bhagavan's blessing in the task.'' Bhagavan said, "Do write it, and it will come all right.''

But as I had taken the written sheets of paper only a few steps away, Sri Maharshi beckoned me to show them to Him once again. I had concluded the Preface in the following way: "It is hoped that this work in the form of Bhagavan's Grace will give to all who aspire to eternal Truth, the Liberation in the form of gaining supreme Bliss shaped as the taking away of all sorrow.'' Maharshi said, "Why

have you put ‘It is hoped’? Why not say ‘It is certain’?” So saying, He corrected with His own hands my ‘*nambukiren*’ into ‘*tinnam*’.

Thus Sri Maharshi set His seal of approval to the book, giving to His devotees that great charter of Liberation, in the form of His Teaching (*upadesa*) which leaves no trace of doubt about it in the mind.

(8) Bhagavan Tells of Kannappar the Saint

Bhagavan began to read the life of Kannappar, the great devotee-saint. He went on reading incidents in his early life, and how he went to the forest and found Kudumi Dever, the Sivalinga, his Lord, up the Kalahasti Hill in the Chittoor district (of Andhra State). Then he told how Kannappar worshipped the Sivalinga with water carried in his mouth, flowers taken from his own hair, and the well-cooked and tasted beef prepared from his own meal - knowing no better and having no better to offer his beloved Lord. The way in which the ordained priest, Siva Gochariar, resented the intruding defiler of the sacred Sivalinga was so characteristically brought out by Bhagavan, who with his own explanations of the rites and the meaning of the *mantras* used in the worship, that it enriched the recital greatly to the benefit and admiration of the devotees.

Then came the scene of scenes, when the Lord in that Sivalinga tested Kannappar and incidentally revealed to Siva Gochariar the intensity of the forest hunter’s worship from a place of hiding. He saw the unexpected trickling of blood from one of the eyes on that Sivalinga; he saw Kannappar running to and fro for herbs, and treating the Lord’s eye with them. Then he saw how, finding them all useless, Kannappar plucked out one of his eyes and applied it to that in the Sivalinga; then, seeing the treatment was effective, he ran into ecstasies of joyful dance.

When Bhagavan came to the story of how Kannappar was plucking out his second eye to heal the second of the Lord, and of how the Sivalinga extended a hand to stop him, saying “Stop, Kannappar!” Bhagavan’s voice choked, His body perspired profusely, His hairs stood on end, tears gushed out from his eyes; He could hardly utter a word, and there was silence, pin-drop silence in the Hall. All there were dumbfounded that this great *Jnani* could be so much overpowered by emotion and ecstasy at the great hunter-saint’s devotion. After a while Sri Bhagavan quietly closed the book, dried his tears in His eyes with the ends of His towel, and laid aside the book, saying, “No, I can’t go on any further.”

Then we could realise the import of His words in the *Aksharamanamalai*: “Having become silent, if one remains like a stone, can that be called real silence?” His blossomed Heart had in it the perfect warmth of devotion, no less than the supreme light of Knowledge.

(15) Thought Travels Too

Mr. and Mrs. S. were visitors from Peru to the Ashram.

The couple narrated all their story to Bhagavan, all the privations they had undergone to have a look at Sri Maharshi. Bhagavan was all kindness to them; He heard their story with great concern, and then

remarked: “You need not have taken all this trouble. You could well have thought of me from where you were, and so could have had all the consolation of a personal visit.” This remark of Sri Bhagavan they could not easily understand, nor did it give them any consolation as they sat at His feet like Mary. Sri Maharshi did not want to disturb their pleasure in being in His immediate vicinity, and so He left them at that.

Later in the evening Sri Maharshi was enquiring about their day-to-day life, and incidentally their talk turned to Peru. The couple began picturing the landscape of Peru and were describing the sea-coast and the beach of their own town. Just then Maharshi remarked: “Is not the beach of your town paved with marble slabs, and are not coconut palms planted in between? Are there not marble benches in rows facing the sea there and did you not often sit on the fifth of those with your wife?” This remark of Sri Maharshi created astonishment in the couple. How could Sri Bhagavan, who had never gone out of Tiruvannamalai, know so intimately such minute details about their own place?

Sri Maharshi only smiled and remarked: “It does not matter how I can tell. Enough if you know that in the Self there is no Space-Time.”

(21) “Who Am I, Nayana?”

Sri Bhagavan was in the Virupaksha Cave on the Hill. One evening after 7 p.m. they were all coming down the Hill to go round Arunachala. The other devotees had all gone in advance; only Sri Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni was in the company of Sri Maharshi, and they were slowly climbing down the steps from the cave.

When they had walked a few steps, all of a sudden Sri Maharshi stopped, and with Him Sri Kavyakanta as well. The full moon was shining bright in the East in the starry sky. Pointing to the moon and the beautiful sky, Sri Bhagavan said: “Nayana! If the sun, the moon, and all the stars have their being in ME, and the Sun himself goes round my hip with his satellites, who am I? who am I?”

This remark of Sri Maharshi made His blessed disciple envisage the Master as the Great Person of the Vedas, as described in *Sri Rudra*, the *Purusha Sukta*, and the *Skamba Sukta*, of the *Atharva Veda*. He is verily all these, and That beyond; there is nothing that is not He.

Sri Kavyakanta later made this revelation known to all the devotees.

(22) Bhagavan as a Classical Sanskrit Poet

Sri Kavyakanta had composed 700 stanzas on Uma in some thirty different metres, and had announced to his devotees in various parts of the country that this poem would be dedicated on a certain Friday in the Shrine of Sri Uma in the great Temple of Sri Arunachaleswara. Over a hundred persons gathered at the Pachaiamman Temple so as to be present on the occasion. Now these Sanskrit verses were not a mere intellectual display by Sri Kavyakanta, great as he was in Sanskrit composition. Proof of his great intellectual capacity may be had from the very fact that in the presence of the heads of the Udipi *Maths* he composed extempore in a single hour the hundred

verses of the '*Ghanta sataka*', giving the cream of the teaching of the three main schools of Hindu Philosophy. His '*Uma Sahasram*' is different from other compositions in that it is *pasyanti vak*, *i.e.,* revealed by the Divine Mother to one who is adept in the *Kundalini* Yoga and in her own words.

At about 8 p.m. on the evening before the dedication day, after supper, Sri Maharshi asked Sri Kavyakanta whether the dedication would have to be postponed to some other Friday as 300 verses were still to be composed to complete the thousand. But Sri Kavyakanta assured Bhagavan that he would complete the poem immediately.

The scene that followed can hardly be believed by one who did not actually witness it. Sri Maharshi sat silent and in deep meditation like the silent Lord Dakshinamurthy. The eager disciples watched in tense admiration the sweet flow of divine music in Sanskrit verse as it came from the lips of the great and magnetic personality of Sri Kavyakanta. He stood there delivering the verses in an unbroken stream while disciples eagerly gathered the words and wrote them down. Oh, for the ecstasy of it all! Life is indeed blessed if only to experience those divine moments.

The '*Sahasram*' was finished in several metres - *Madalekha, Pramanika, Upajati, Aryagiti*, etc. For a while the disciples present enjoyed the deep ecstasy of the silence pervading the atmosphere, as Sri Kavyakanta concluded with the normal type of colophone. Then Sri Bhagavan opened His eyes and asked, "Nayana, has all I said been taken down?" From Sri Ganapati Muni came the ready reply and grateful response: "Bhagavan, all that Bhagavan inspired in me has been taken down!"

It is thus clear that Sri Bhagavan inspired the final 300 verses of the '*Uma Sahasram*' through the lips of Sri Kavyakanta, without speaking a word, as usually understood, or rather in the silence characteristic of the Silent Sage of Arunachala. It is noteworthy that whereas Sri Kavyakanta revised the first 700 verses of this monumental work some six times; he did not revise any of the last 300. This being Sri Bhagavan's own utterance, there was no need to 'polish them'. These 300 verses are to be considered as Sri Bhagavan's unique contribution to Sanskrit poetry.

Part Three

The Guru's Teaching

(34) The Ribhu Gita

An anecdote about the translation by Bhikshu Sastri is worth relating. Deeply struck by pure Advaita of the teachings in this *Gita*, the translator held so steadfastly to that glorious doctrine that he denied the truth or reality of all phenomena, including the Gods themselves; he said their existence is as true only as that of the barren woman's son, the hare's horn and the flowers seen in the sky. Teased too much by his atheism, the manifest Gods put the translator to the test, and he lost his eyesight; only when he wrote verses in praise of Lord Nataraja was his sight restored to him. To have this punishment for daring to defy the Form-aspect (*saguna*) of the Formless (*nirguna*) Divine excused, he had to write a verse in praise of Sri Nataraja at the end of each of the 44 chapters of the *Ribhu-Gita*.

This is the essence of the teaching of this precious *Gita*, so often referred to by Sri Bhagavan:

“The Self is One and Whole, Self-awareness. This is the Divine (*brahman*) the Indestructible, the Existent, Beginningless and Endless Many. There is nothing apart from the Self (*atman*), nor anything else worthy of meditation. All that is manifest - the ‘I’, the ‘you’, the ‘he’, the Lord, and the all - all is the Divine. There is not even an atom apart from the Self that IS, the Single Unbroken Essence (*akhanda eka rasa*). Therefore the surety “I am the Divine” (*aham brahmasmi*) is the endless True Knowledge. Know: “I am Being-Awareness-Bliss, of the nature of my own Self. I am without any differentiation of caste, clan, birth, and the like. I am the Divine Absolute shining eternally in all splendour as the All, the Full, spotless, intelligent, ever unbound, true and still. Beyond the body, senses, life-current, thought, intellect, mind and ego-sense; unattached to the five sheaths (*kosa*), unaffected by the incidents of birth and death, void of a world that is lifeless and animate, you are That. This is experienced as ‘I am the Divine’ by negating through stainless enquiry the whole concept of individual, the world and beyond.

“The maya of the world is not for you; you are the bliss of spotlessness, without either purpose or uncertainity. You are the purport of Vedanta. You are the indivisible form beyond the three clouds. You are yourself the One Self, without attributes or changes, which cannot be experienced by mind or speech. Here, there, this, that, I and he - all such thoughts convey is only mind; the elements and their compounds are only mind. The concepts of time, space, objects, the triads and their appearances, celestials and men, Hari and the Creator Brahma, the Guru and the disciple - all are mind alone.

“Here is the true form of worship: ‘I am the ocean of Bliss that is ever full!’ - this beatitude is the true bath in holy water (*abhisheka*) for the divinity of the Supreme Lord. ‘I am the unbounded Expanse!’ this beatitude is the offering of cloth to the Supreme Lord Siva. ‘I am the Self!’ - this beatitude is the real offering of ornaments to the Supreme Lord Siva. Discarding the thought-form leading to the qualities (*gunas*) - this is the offering of the boundless to Siva the Supreme Lord. The annihilation of all sense of difference between the Self, the Guru, and the Lord - that is the offering of *bel* leaves to Siva, the Supreme Lord. Casting away the tendencies of the past (*vasanas*) - this is the burning of incense to Parasiva, the Supreme Lord. ‘I am the attributeless Parasiva, the Supreme Lord!’ - this beatitude is the waving of Light (*arati*) before the Supreme Lord, Siva. The realising that the Divine and the Self are one - is the burning of the fragrant gums before Siva, the Supreme Lord. That alone is the offering of flowers, in which one abides as the Self, the Supreme Bliss. That alone is the singing of the Name in harmony (*namasankirtan*), wherein one conceives himself as being without names and forms.

“I am the Supreme Knowledge determined by the scriptures on spiritual wisdom (*vedanta*). I am the solid Bliss abiding as in the universal Great Silence. I am the single impartible Own Form (*swarupa*).

“Abidance in the Void is firmness; that itself is wisdom (*Jnana*), liberation, Siva and the Alone (*kaivalya*). The forms of thought are impurity, creating time-space and the differentiation of the world and individual, very harmful. Mind takes the form of intention and uncertainity. The egoic self does not really exist; the Truth is “I am the Divine (*ahambrahmasmi*)”. Meditate on this, practise the wisdom-yoga, destroy all sense of difference, be freed from the disease of mind, obtain the Stillness

of the tangible experience, and come to realize the release from bondage. Abiding in the Self as "I am the Divine" is the real ablution; the determination of the Self as the ever-realized Divine is the real heaven.

"He is freed while alive (*Jivanmukta*) who, motionless like the Hill, is still and immaculate, the Self in Itself, absolute Existence experienced as Bliss. Rid of individuality, rid of all concepts, he who is still, as pure Light, immaculate, peaceful solid Bliss is free without a body (*Videhamukta*). Knowing, feeling, thinking, praying, determining, mingling, abiding - all these must be in the Self Itself. Meditate incessantly on '*Aham brahmasmi*' until it becomes permanent; later on, be freed from even this thought and be the Self Itself alone.

"Seeing any thing apart from the Divine is the cause of the sense of difference and so of fear. The thought-waves that rise in the mind are the cause of bondage. When there is no mind, there is neither world nor individual soul. The conquest of the mind is the greatest of all conquests. It is the Divine Himself who appears as world, individual and the beyond. So abidance as the Divine all times and in all places will result in conquering the mind. Then will you come to realize "All is the Divine; I am that Self;" and you will attain the natural state.

"The view 'That am I' is the surest way to conquer the mind. "There is nothing apart from me; the three states, the five sheaths, the three qualities, the separate and the crowd (*vyashti, samashti*) - all these are not apart from me. All that is seen is the Seer, the Self; be at peace by the feeling "That am I". Cast off the idea 'I am the body'; be firm in the feeling 'I am' - the Self.

"The conclusions of the Four Vedas - Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva - are all the same; the 'well known Divine,' the 'I am the Divine', the 'That art thou', and 'I am the Self Creative *Brahma*, you are the Divine Knowledge'. He who teaches you thus is the real Guru. After obtaining this teaching (*upadesa*), throw off all other books and be firm in meditating on 'I am the Divine.'

"Let the Pure Existence of the Divine alone be realized; if the sun of this Knowledge arises, how can the darkness of ignorance prevail? The mind of him who is certain that the Divine is one and whole cannot be shaken by the Great Illusion (*maya*) even if the vast Mount Meru be shaken by tying it to a thread. Practice "That am I" (*soham*); the experience 'I am Siva' (*Sivoham*) will make you into Siva. Therefore sing 'Sivoham, Sivoham, Sivoham!"

Conscious Immortality

Conversations with Sri Ramana Maharshi

By
Paul Brunton and Munagala Venkataramaiah

Revised Edition 1996

Note to the Second Edition

The book does not purport to be a comprehensive exposition of the Maharshi's teachings, nor is it a day by day account of life or conversations with the Maharshi. Rather, it is a compendium of topics as remembered and recorded by two devotees over a limited period. Some portions of the text have appeared in other Ashram publications, but the directness and lucidity of the teachings as presented here, inspires us to publish it in this form.

To facilitate fluency of reading, the language has been revised where appropriate, while remaining true to the content's meaning. For authenticity, in cases when the Maharshi was asked the same question by different people, we have repeated the question and the Maharshi's answer, and grouped such questions together. Readers can then see for themselves how the Maharshi's response varied, depending on who was talking. As he himself said, 'Questions are asked from a certain viewpoint and given from the same.' For this reason, when the Maharshi has used the same simile or story more than once, but in a different context, this has also been repeated.

However, in publishing this collection of the Maharshi's words, we would not wish to give the impression that he spoke as copiously as the format may suggest. As Brunton was at pains to point out, the Maharshi's main teaching was in silence.

1. On Daily Life

Q: Has the body any value to the Self?

M: Yes, it is through the body's help that the Self is realized.

Q: What about diet?

M: Food affects the mind. The right food makes it more sattvic. For the practice of any yoga, vegetarianism is absolutely necessary.

Q: What about those not accustomed to a vegetarian diet?

M: Habit is only adjustment to the environment. It is the mind that matters.

The fact is that the mind has been trained to think certain foods tasty. Nourishment may be obtained

from vegetarian food no less than from flesh. But the realized person's mind is not influenced by the food eaten. However, get accustomed to vegetarianism gradually.

Q: How can we root out the sex idea?

M: By rooting out the false idea of the body being the Self. There is no sex in the Self. Be the real Self, then there will be no trouble with sex.

Q: What is renunciation?

M: Giving up the ego.

Q: Is it not giving up possessions?

M: The possessor too.

Q: I have committed a sexual sin.

M: Even if you have, it does not matter, so long as you do not think afterwards that you have done so. The Self is not aware of any sin and renunciation of sex is internal, not merely of the body.

3. The Practice of Meditation

Q: How can the mind be controlled?

M: There are two methods. One is to see what the mind is, then it will subside. The second is to focus on something else - the predominant idea will eliminate all others. The object is up to the individual.

It is necessary to be aware while controlling thoughts, otherwise it will lead to sleep. Awareness is the chief factor, as indicated by the emphasis on pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi, even after pranayama. Pranayama makes the mind steady and suppresses thoughts. Why is this not enough? Because awareness then is the one necessary factor. Such states are imitated by taking morphine, chloroform etc, but they do not lead to liberation.

Meditation is one approach that will drive away other thoughts. The one thought of God will dominate others. That is concentration. The object of meditation is thus the same as that of vichara.

Q: What is the difference between meditation and Self-enquiry?

M: Meditation is possible only if the ego is retained; there is the ego and the object meditated upon. This method is indirect. However, if we seek the ego-source, the ego disappears and what remains is the Self. This method is the direct one.

Q: (On another occasion) What is the difference between meditation and vichara?

M: Meditation can be upon an object, external or otherwise. Thus subject and object differ. In vichara, both subject and object are the same - the Self.

5. The Mind

Q: How can the mind be made to go?

M: No attempt should be made to destroy it. To think or wish is in itself a thought. If the thinker is sought, the thoughts will disappear.

Q: Will they disappear by themselves? It seems so difficult.

M: They will disappear because they are unreal. The idea of difficulty is itself an obstacle to realization. It must be overcome. To remain as the Self is not difficult. This thought of difficulty is the chief obstacle. A little practice in discovering the source of 'I' will make you think differently. Absolute freedom from thoughts is the state conducive to such recognition of the Self. Mind is but an aggregate of thoughts.

Q: I begin to ask myself 'Who am I?' and eliminate the body as not 'I', the prana as not 'I', the mind as not 'I' and I am not able to proceed further.

M: Well, that is as far as the intellect goes. Your process is only intellectual. Indeed all the scriptures mention the process only to guide the seeker to know the truth. The truth cannot be directly pointed out, hence this intellectual process. You see, the one who eliminates all the 'not-I' cannot eliminate the 'I'. To say 'I am not this,' or 'I am that', there must be the 'I'. This 'I' is only the ego or the 'I'-thought. Once the 'I'-thought has arisen, all other thoughts follow. The 'I'-thought is therefore the root-thought. If the root is eliminated all others are uprooted. Ask yourself 'Who am I?' Find its source. Then all these will vanish and the pure Self will remain. The 'I' is always there - there is always the feeling of 'I', otherwise could you deny your existence?

The reality of yourself cannot be questioned. The Self is the primal reality. The ordinary person unconsciously takes reality to be their true inner reality plus everything which has come into their consciousness as pertaining to themselves - body, etc. This they have to unlearn.

11. The Guru and Sagehood

Q: Does the guru have to have a human body?

M: Because you identify yourself with your body you ask this question. Find out if you are the body. The Bhagavad Gita says that those who cannot understand the transcendental nature of Sri Krishna are fools, deluded by ignorance. The master appears in order to dispel that ignorance. As Tayumanavar puts it, he appears to dispel a person's ignorance, just as a deer is used as a decoy to capture another deer in the jungle. The master has to appear with a body in order to eradicate our ignorance, the 'I am the body' idea.

Q: Is a teacher necessary?

M: With any kind of physical and mental training we look for a competent teacher - the same rule applies to spiritual matters.

Q: Is a guru needed for spiritual progress?

M: Yes, but the guru is within you; he is one with your own Self.

Q: Is the guru necessary?

M: Yes, the guru is necessary. He shows the road to the Self and carries a light for you. The guru sees all people as the Self. To him there are none who are ignorant; he finds no difference between them and himself.

Q: Is a guru absolutely necessary?

M: So long as duality persists in you, a guru is necessary. Take the guru to be the Self, and yourself to be the individual self. Because you identify yourself with the body you think the guru is also somebody, but you are not the body and neither is the guru. This knowledge that you are the Self and so is the guru is gained by what you call realization.

Q: How can we meet the appointed guru?

M: Intense meditation brings about the consummation. The sage's glance has a purifying effect.If you understand your own reality, the rishi's reality will be clear to you. There is only one Master and that is the Self. The One Initiator works through all the gurus in the world, thus there is no difference between them and Him. He bestows His teaching and initiation - which is the highest - in silence.

Q: How can one identify a competent guru?

M: By the peace of mind in his presence and by the sense of respect you feel for him.

12. The Self

Q: How can the all-immanent God reside in the Heart?

M: Do we not reside in one place? Do you not say you are in your body? Similarly, God is said to reside in the Heart. The Heart is not one place. Some name is mentioned for the place of God because we think we are in the body. This kind of instruction is meant for those who can appreciate only relative knowledge. Being immanent everywhere, there is no place for God. Because we think we are in the body, we also believe that we are born. However, we do not think of the body, of God, or of a method of realization in our deep sleep. Yet in our waking state, we hold onto the body and think we are in it. Paramatman is that from which the body is born, in which it lives and unto which it revolves. We, however, think that we reside within the body, hence such instruction is given. The instruction means, 'Look within.' The Heart

is not physical. Meditation should not be on the right or the left. Meditation should be on the Self. Everyone knows ‘I am’. Who is the ‘I’? It will be neither within nor without, neither on the right nor the left. ‘I am,’ that is all. The Heart is the centre from which everything springs. Because you now see the world, the body etc, it is said that there is a centre for them called the Heart. But when actually in it, the Heart is neither in the centre nor at the circumference as then there is nothing else.

13. Realization

Q: If ‘I’ am always here and now, why don’t I feel it?

M: That’s is the point! Who says that it is not felt? Does the real ‘I’ say it or the false ‘I’? Examine it. You will find it is the wrong ‘I’. The wrong ‘I’ is the obstruction. It has to be removed in order that the true ‘I’ might not be hidden.

The feeling, ‘I have not realized,’ is the obstruction to realization. In fact, you are already realized; there is nothing to realize. If there were, it would have to be something new, not existing so far, that would occur sometime in the future.

What has birth will also die. If realization were not eternal it would not be worth having. Therefore, what we seek is not that which must happen afresh. It is only that which is eternal and which is not known, due to obstructions, that is what we seek. Ignorance is the obstruction. Remove it, and all will be well.

The ignorance is identical with the ‘I’-thought. Find its source and it will vanish. The ‘I’-thought is like a spirit which is not palpable, and it rises up simultaneously with the body, flourishes on it and disappears with it. The body-consciousness is the wrong ‘I’. Give it up! This is done by seeking the source of the ‘I’. The body does not say ‘I am’. It is you who says, ‘I am the body.’ Find out who this ‘I’ is. Seeking its source, it will vanish.

Q: What is to be our sadhana?

M: The sahaja of siddha! Sahaja is the original state so that sadhana amounts to the removal of obstacles for the realization of this abiding truth.

By repeated practice one can become accustomed to turning inwards and finding the Self. One must always and constantly make an effort, until one has permanently realized. Once the effort ceases, the state becomes natural and the Supreme takes possession of the person with an unbroken current. Until it has become permanently natural and your habitual state, know that you have not realized the Self, only glimpsed it.

The soul that realizes the Self may still be connected with a working body, senses, and mind, without identifying itself with that body.

There can be satisfaction only when you reach the source, otherwise there will be restlessness.

CRUMBS FROM HIS TABLE

by

RAMANANANDA SWARNAGIRI

Dedication

to

Sri Ramana

O Thou Spiritual Guide of Guides! O Thou Teacher of Teachers! O Thou Sankara Incarnate! O Thou Rama Krishna Incarnate! Thou who dost dispel the cloud of ignorance - nay, the arch-destroyer of the illusion - the *Dehatma Buddhi* - by mere sight, who dost manifest Thyself in the form of Sri Sadguru to Thy humble devotee, be pleased to accept this humble dedication to Thy Holy Feet, and lead me, O Thou Shining Light, on to my goal and make me one with Thee.

RAMANANANDA SWARNAGIRI

Publisher's Note To The Third Edition

On the insistence of several devotees we have great pleasure in now reprinting this precious gem of a book which has been out of print for over twenty years. Sri Bhagavan used to like this book and often asked some devotees to read it. We are confident that readers will derive both pleasure and benefit out of this little treasure.

84th Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan,
31st December, 1963.
Publisher.

PREFACE

In December, 1936, I issued a small pamphlet containing some of the conversations I had had with Sri Ramana Bhagavan at Tiruvannamalai, as well as some which some of my friends had with Him in my presence, especially those which contained His spiritual teachings and which I was able to pick up as they fell from His sacred lips, during the few months I stayed at Sri Ramana ashram in 1935. That the instructions reported were not only those imparted to me but also those conveyed to other enquirers explains to some extent the apparent inconsistency and perhaps illogical sequence in the questions and answers and in some cases repetitions also. I have attempted, in this book, to weave them as much as I can into some order, but I am afraid a certain amount of mix-up and inconsistency (either in this book itself or other published or reported versions of Sri Bhagavan's teachings) is unavoidable, due to various reasons, chief amongst which are: firstly, the enquirers belong to different schools of thought and varying stages of practice and progress, and the answers depend on the nature of their enquiry; secondly, Sri Bhagavan's attitude of indifference to assertions and affirmations; and above all, thirdly, the capacity of the enquirers to obtain a correct record of His answers and their subsequent ability to give good expression to them.

Though Sri Bhagavan has repeatedly said in His authenticated publications and in reply to enquirers that the method of "Enquiry" *i.e.*, "Who am I?" is *the easiest and the most direct path* leading to salvation, yet He has also nowhere and at no time deprecated other methods and paths, *Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga* and so on, as will be seen from his reply to a query under the head "Self-realization".

Whether or not one were intent upon the quest of the Self or Truth or God, Sri Bhagavan's directions to me, to enquire within, as to "Who I am", appeared to be the most rationalistic and the first thing that I should do and know, rather than run after places of pilgrimage, which I otherwise contemplated, especially with the gift of free travel by rail that He has so kindly placed at my convenience. Remarking about a short trip to Tirupati Hills, in August, 1936, which I had to take on account of compulsion from a brother of mine, Sri Bhagavan said I might do it, because I could afford it, the obvious meaning of the remark being, that these visits were unwarranted and that I need not do so, in spite of the availability of concession of free travel.

The uniqueness of His teaching consists in the fact of his insistence on the enquiry method from the very beginning instead of waiting till eternity for the purification of body, mind and intellect and of the enquiry straightaway giving one that mental quiet, as it were in a trice, which one does not get, till after some years of Japa. Even such practitioners as know the meaning of Gayatri, the highest mantra, and repeat it a crore of times admit this. If, on the other hand, one said Gayatri, with meaning and *bhav, only once* and instead of repeating "I will meditate thus, I will meditate thus" *remained still, confirmed in the meaning of the mantra*, namely *that the Power which induces one's intellect in the various pursuits of life is the same as that in the Sun, which, by its illumination, removes the darkness of this earth and is the cause of the existence and growth of all living beings on earth*, he would soon *find himself as the light itself*, bereft of body and form, perfectly still and thoughtless - a pleasurable experience indeed is this - and what one would attain in this manner is also attained by merely probing the source of thought, the "I" thought, being the first thought, by asking "Who am I?" and waiting 'still' for an answer, *carefully guarding against obtrusion* of the sneaky intruder (the thought monkey). Sri Bhagavan's teaching can be practised in addition to, and without detriment to, other practices, *and that from the very beginning*, with immense and incalculable advantage.

I issued, on the first occasion, a brief report containing the main instructions only and not the illustrative stories, as I hoped that the taste of a few crumbs would alone be sufficient to induce the readers to seek the bread of life itself at His hands, and serve my ambition to create such an interest in Him and His teachings. Since the issue of that leaflet however, I have been urged by some of my friends and others to issue if possible a more detailed account of my experiences, and more especially of Sri Bhagavan's teachings, and I am therefore issuing this now to satisfy their very sincere demand and to enable others, who have not had the opportunity of reading the first edition of the book, to do so now.

December 1937
Ramanananda Swarnagiri

8 - Control of Mind vs. Destruction of Mind

D: When I am engaged in enquiry as to the source from which the 'I' springs, I arrive at a stage of stillness of mind beyond which I find myself unable to proceed further. I have no thought of any kind and there is an emptiness. a blankness. A mild light pervades and I feel that it is myself bodiless. I have neither cognition nor vision of body and form. The experience lasts nearly half an hour and is pleasing. Would I be correct in concluding that all that was necessary to secure eternal happiness (i.e. freedom or salvation or whatever one calls it) was to continue the practice till this experience could be maintained for hours, days and months together?

B: This does not mean salvation; such a condition is termed *manolaya* or temporary stillness of thought. *Manolaya* means concentration, temporarily arresting the movement of thoughts; as soon as this concentration ceases, thoughts, old and new, rush in as usual and even though this temporary lulling of mind should last a thousand years it will never lead to total destruction of thought, which is what is called salvation or liberation from birth and death. The practicer must therefore be ever on the alert and enquire within as to who has this experience, who realises its pleasantness. Failing this enquiry he will go into a long trance or deep sleep (*Yoga nidra*). Due to the absence of a proper guide at this stage of spiritual practice many have been delude and fallen a prey to a false sense of salvation and only a few have, either by the merit of good acts in their previous births, or by extreme grace, been enables to reach the goal safely.

Sadhakas (seekers) rarely understand the difference between this temporary stilling of the mind (*manolaya*) and permanent destruction of thoughts (*manonasa*). In *manolaya* there is temporary subsidence of thought-waves, and, though this temporary period may even last for a thousand years, thoughts, which are thus temporarily stilled, rise up as soon as the *manolaya* ceases. One must therefore, watch one's spiritual progress carefully. One must not allow oneself to be overtaken by such spells of stillness of thought: the moment one experiences this, one must revive consciousness and enquire within as to who it is who experiences this stillness. While not allowing any thoughts to intrude, he must not, at the same time, be overtaken by this deep sleep (*Yoga nidra*) or Self-hypnotism. Though this is a sign of progress towards the goal, yet it is also the point where the divergence between the road to salvation and *Yoga nidra* takes place. The easy way, the direct way, the shortest cut to salvation is the Enquiry method. By such enquiry, you will drive the thought force deeper till it reaches its source and merges therein. It is then that you will have the response from within and find that you rest there, destroying all thoughts, once and for all.

This temporary stilling of thought comes automatically in the usual course of one's practice and it is a clear sign of one's progress but the danger of it lies in mistaking it for the final goal of spiritual practice and being thus deceived. It is exactly here that a spiritual guide is necessary and he saves a lot of the spiritual aspirant's time and energy which would otherwise be fruitlessly wasted.

The writer now realised that it was to get this important lesson at the right point of his progress, that he was taken, even unknown to himself and against his will to Sri Ramana, through the intervention of his superior. He had come exactly to the position where the road bifurcates, one side leading to

destruction of thought (salvation) and the other to *Yoga nidra* (prolonged deep sleep). A way-shower or a road sign-post was necessary at this stage and the way-shower must necessarily be in the shape of a personal Guru, a realized soul, and perhaps by sheer acts of merit in his past birth and no ‘’known special merit’’ of his own in this birth, he was brought before such a realized soul, in the person of Sri Ramana, to obtain these instructions from him, failing which he would have been probably groping in the same manner as the sage on the banks of the Ganges, in the story narrated above.

11 - Dream, Sleep and Samadhi

D: What is *Maya*? Illusion?

B: Seeing ice without seeing that it is water is illusion, Maya. Therefore saying things like killing the mind or anything like that also has no meaning, for after all mind also is part and parcel of the Self. Resting in the Self or inhering in the Self is *mukti*, getting rid of *Maya. Maya* is not a separate entity. Absence of light is called darkness, so also absence of Knowledge, Illumination etc., is called ignorance, illusion or *Maya*.

D: What is *samadhi*?

B: When the mind is in communion with the Self in darkness, it is called *nidra* (sleep) i.e. the involution of the mind in ignorance. Involution in a conscious or wakeful state is called *samadhi*. *Samadhi* is continuous inherence in the Self in a waking state. *Nidra* or sleep is also inherence in the Self but in an unconscious state. In *sahaja samadhi* the communion is continuous.

D: What are *kevala nirvikalpa samadhi* and *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi*?

B: The involution of the mind in the Self, but without its destruction, is *kevala nirvikalpa samadhi*. There are four obstacles in this, namely, vacillation of:

i. mind

ii. life breath or *prana*

iii. body,

iv. *drishti*.

In *kevala nirvikalpa samadhi* one is not free from *vasanas* and does not, therefore, attain *mukti*. Only after the *samskaras* have been destroyed can one attain salvation.

D: When can one practice *sahaja samadhi*?

B: Even from the beginning. Even though one practices *kevala nirvikalpa samadhi* for years together, if one has not rooted out the *vasanas*, he will not attain salvation.

13 - Some Surprising Incidents

One day when all the visitors went to the dining hall for the midday meal a Brahmin youth was ejected from there. At the sight of this the writer felt disinclined to sit down for his meal; however he consoled himself and took his food. He was, however, so badly upset by the incident that he did not take any of the *prasadham* (small gifts of eatables frequently distributed at the Asramam, after having been presented to Sri Bhagavan and a small quantity thereof accepted by Him) given to him later that day. At about 3 p.m., a monkey came and sat opposite to him in the Hall, and he attempted to give it all the prasadham so far collected. Sri Bhagavan, looking at him, remarked that if he fed that one fellow hundreds of other idlers would pour into the Asramam and it would be converted from a place of retreat for *sadhakas, Jnanis* and Yogis, to an idlers asylum. Anyone connecting such a plain remark as this with the writer's mental attitude cannot but conclude that Bhagavan wanted to convey consolation to his disturbed mind and convince him that He has destined everything for everybody, and it was utterly useless for him to identify himself with such miseries and worry himself in vain over His actions.

2. The writer was about to put a question to Sri Bhagavan and just as he began doing so, Sri Bhagavan answered him by referring him to page 73, para 2 of Mr. Brunton's ''Secret Path'' and remarked that, as stated therein, speech only beclouded argument and disturbed the silent communication of thought.

3. Sri Bhagavan was correcting and aiding some youngsters of not more than ten years of age in memorising His Sanskrit verses *Upadesa Saram* and the writer was laughing, so to say, up his sleeve, at the futility of coaching these youngsters who could not understand the A, B, C of this highly metaphysical poetry. Without the utterance of a single word, Sri Bhagavan turned to him and remarked that though these children might not understand the meaning of these poems then, yet they could be of immense help to them, and would be recalled with great relief and pleasure, when they came up of age and were in difficulties.

15 - Conclusion

There are several more anecdotes, of an instructive character which have not been recorded herein for fear of enlarging this volume; and, as Sri Bhagavan is very sparing of his words. It would really be a hard task to collect voluminous material, however long one might attend the Asramam and however eager one may be to collect all that falls from His lips; so if any aspirant has been stirred by the few episodes and conversations, which have been recorded here, the writer can only invite him in the words of the author of the *Katha Upanishad* (III - 14) to :-

Awake! Arise! (and) Seek the Great One, Sri Ramana, the Great, Taste the bread of life at His hands, And obtain wisdom.

OM TAT SAT

Sri Ramanarpanamastu

⇦

DAY BY DAY WITH BHAGAVAN

From a Diary of

A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

(Covering March 16, 1945 to January 4, 1947)

V. S. RAMANAN
President, Board of Trustees
SRI RAMANASRAMAM
TIRUVANNAMALAI
S. INDIA

PREFACE

A word as to the origin of this work may not be out of place. It was my great good fortune to live for more than four years, from August 1942 till the end of 1946, at Sri Ramanasramam and to have the inestimable benefit of daily contact with our Bhagavan. After I had been there for some months various people who visited the Asramam began to suggest that it would be a good thing if I recorded Bhagavan's utterances on spiritual topics, either in answer to questions from visitors or in any other context. For a long time, however, I was too lazy to make the effort. Nevertheless, whenever I read the 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa', as I used to now and then, I felt how desirable it was that a similar book should be compiled in the case of our Bhagavan. When I had drifted on like this for some years, on the morning of January 1st, 1945, within the space of about an hour, three different persons - a lawyer's clerk, son of Sankara Ammal doing service in the Asramam, a businessman of Madras by name M. V. P. Sastri, whom I had known since his boyhood at Chittoor, and O. P. Ramaswami Reddi, who later became Chief Minister of Madras - all urged me to undertake the task as, in their kind opinion, I was best fitted for it besides having the necessary facility of constant close contact with Bhagavan.

The appeal coming from such widely different persons on the first day of the year and all of them approaching me in such quick succession and without any previous consultation amongst themselves made such a deep impression on me that I took it as a call really from Bhagavan. So, that very day I started keeping an Asramam Diary. My idea was to preserve for Bhagavan's devotees all that took place in the Asramam that might be of interest or importance from one point of view or another, and mainly Bhagavan's answers to questions addressed to him by visitors from all quarters of the globe, for many of whom I acted as a sort of official translator in Bhagavan's Court.

I told Bhagavan of the circumstances under which I started the work, thus asking for his blessing on it. Then I obtained permission from the *Sarvadhikari*. Also, for the first few days I read out to Bhagavan whatever I had recorded so that he could correct me anywhere where I had gone wrong. Even when I was interpreting Bhagavan to visitors, if I made the slightest mistake Bhagavan would

pull me up. Whenever I myself was in doubt as to what Bhagavan meant I used to ask for further clarification and Bhagavan willingly explained things again for my benefit. After the first two or three days I gave up reading my entries to Bhagavan daily, but on any day when I was in doubt whether I had accurately recorded what Bhagavan had said, I would read out my entry for the day and correct it wherever he indicated that it was necessary.

Only a part of these records of mine seems to be available to the Asramam authorities for publication just now. I am glad that at least so much is to be published by them immediately. I believe they came into existence because Bhagavan willed it and I believe it is his will that at least a part of them should now appear in print. I hope and pray to Bhagavan that the publication may prove not merely of interest but of great use to those who read it and that he may bestow his Grace on all who go through it in earnestness and faith.

1st January 1952.
A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

8-11-45 Morning

When (on 2-11-45) Mr. Roy asked Bhagavan the best way of killing the ego, Bhagavan said, "To ask the mind to kill the mind is like making the thief the policeman. He will go with you and pretend to catch the thief, but nothing will be gained. So you must turn inward and see where the mind rises from and then it will cease to exist." In reference to this answer, Mr. Thambi Thorai of Jaffna (who has been living in Palakothu for over a year) asked me, whether asking the mind to turn inward and seek its source is not also employing the mind. So, I put this doubt before Bhagavan and Bhagavan said, "Of course we are employing the mind. It is well known and admitted that only with the help of the mind the mind has to be killed. But instead of setting about saying there is a mind, and I want to kill it, you begin to seek the source of the mind, and you find the mind does not exist at all. The mind, turned outwards, results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards, it becomes itself the Self. Such a mind is sometimes called *arupa manas* or *suddha manas*."

Today, the doorway on the south facing Bhagavan's seat has been closed and a window constructed in its place; and the middle window on the northern wall has been replaced by the doorway removed from the southern wall. Going through this doorway, Bhagavan need not climb any steps.

2-1-46 Afternoon

Mr. Joshi has submitted what Bhagavan calls a question paper, and Bhagavan answers the same.

First about the *jnani's* doing work, without the mind: "You imagine one cannot do work if the mind is killed. Why do you suppose that it is the mind alone that can make one do work. There may be other causes which can also produce activity. Look at this clock, for instance. It is working without a mind. Again suppose we say the *jnani* has a mind. His mind is very different from the ordinary man's mind. He is like the man who is hearing a story told with his mind all on some distant object. The mind rid of *vasanas*, though doing work, is not doing work. On the other hand, if the mind is full of *vasanas*, it is doing work even if the body is not active or moving."

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Question 2: “Is *soham* the same as ‘Who am I?’”

Answer: “*Aham* alone is common to them. One is *soham*. The other is *koham*. They are different. Why should we go on saying *soham*? One must find out the real ‘I’. In the question ‘Who am I?’ by ‘I’ is meant the ego. Trying to trace it and find its source, we see it has no separate existence but merges in the real ‘I’.”

Question 3: “I find surrender is easier. I want to adopt that path.”

Answer: “By whatever path you go, you will have to lose yourself in the One. Surrender is complete only when you reach the stage ‘Thou art all’ and ‘Thy will be done’.”

“The state is not different from *jnana*. In *soham* there is *dvaita*. In surrender there is *advaita*. In the reality there is neither *dvaita* nor *advaita*, but That which is, is. Surrender appears easy because people imagine that, once they say with their lips ‘I surrender’ and put their burdens on their Lord, they can be free and do what they like. But the fact is that you can have no likes or dislikes after your surrender and that your will should become completely non-existent, the Lord’s Will taking its place. Such death of the ego is nothing different from *jnana*. So by whatever path you may go, you must come to *jnana* or oneness.”

Question 4: “How am I to deal with my passions? Am I to check them or satisfy them? If I follow Bhagavan’s method and ask, ‘To whom are these passions?’ they do not seem to die but grow stronger.”

Answer: “That only shows you are not going about my method properly. The right way is to find out the root of all passions, the source whence they proceed, and get rid of that. If you check the passions, they may get suppressed for the moment, but will appear again. If you satisfy them, they will be satisfied only for the moment and will again crave satisfaction. Satisfying desires and thereby trying to root them out is like trying to quench fire by pouring kerosene oil over it. The only way is to find the root of desire and thus remove it.”

Another visitor asked Bhagavan, “If I try to make the ‘Who am I?’ enquiry, I fall into sleep. What should I do?”

Bhagavan: “Persist in the enquiry throughout your waking hours. That would be quite enough. If you keep on making the enquiry till you fall asleep, the enquiry will go on during sleep also. Take up the enquiry again as soon as you wake up.”

Another visitor asked Bhagavan if it was not necessary that the *varnasrama* differences should go if the nation was to progress.

Bhagavan: “How can one say whether it is necessary or not necessary? I never say anything on such subjects. People often come and ask me for my opinion on *varnasrama*. If I say anything they will at once go and publish in the papers, ‘So and so also is of such and such an opinion.’ The same scriptures which have laid down *varnasrama dharma* have also proclaimed the oneness of all life and *abheda buddhi* as the only reality. Is it possible for anyone to teach a higher truth than the Unity or oneness of all life? There is no need for anyone to start reforming the country or the nation before reforming himself. Each man’s first duty is to realise his true nature. If after doing it, he feels like reforming the

country or nation, by all means let him take up such reform. Ram Tirtha advertised, 'Wanted reformers - but reformers who will reform themselves first.' No two persons in the world can be alike or can act alike. External differences are bound to persist, however hard we may try to obliterate them. The attempts of so-called social reformers, to do away with such classes or divisions as *varnasrama* has created, have not succeeded, but have only created new divisions and added a few more castes or classes to the already existing ones, such as the Brahmo-Samajists and the Arya-Samajists. The only solution is for each man to realise his true nature."

Another visitor said, "*Jnanis* generally retire from active life and do not engage in any worldly activity."

Bhagavan: "They may or may not. Some, even after realising, carry on trade or business or rule over a kingdom. Some retire into forests and abstain from all acts except those absolutely necessary to keep life in the body. So, we cannot say all *jnanis* give up activity and retire from life."

Visitor: I want to know if Bhagavan can give concrete examples, like the butcher *Dharmavyadha* mentioned in our books of *jnanis* now living and doing their ordinary daily work in life.

Bhagavan did not answer.

Visitor: "Is renunciation necessary for Self-realisation?"

Bhagavan: "Renunciation and realisation are the same. They are different aspects of the same state. Giving up the non-self is renunciation. Inhering in the Self is *jnana* or Self-realisation. One is the negative and the other the positive aspect of the same, single truth. *Bhakti, jnana, yoga* - are different names for Self-realisation or *mukti* which is our real nature. These appear as the means first. They eventually are the goal. So long as there is conscious effort required on our part to keep up *bhakti, yoga, dhyana*, etc., they are the means. When they go on without any effort on our part, we have attained the goal. There is no realisation to be achieved. The real is ever as it is. What we have done is, we have realised the unreal, *i.e.*, taken for real the unreal. We have to give up that. That is all that is wanted.

Visitor: How has the unreal come? Can the unreal spring from the real?

Bhagavan: See if it has sprung. There is no such thing as the unreal, from another standpoint. The Self alone exists. When you try to trace the ego, based on which alone the world and all exist, you find the ego does not exist at all and so also all this creation.

13-2-46 Morning

After *parayana*, Bhagavan was talking to a bearded gentleman past middle age and yet looking sturdy and strong. I went and sat by the side of the visitor. Bhagavan told me, "This is Gajanan, alias Devarata, the answers to whose questions have been recorded in Chapter III of *Ramana Gita*. He was with us at Skandasramam in 1917." I thereupon said, "I know. The same who was in Nepal and whose photo and letter arrived immediately after Bhagavan was making enquiries about him once." For the benefit of those who might not know the incident, Bhagavan said, "Some years ago, when Naina's son Mahadevan came here, I was enquiring about this Gajanan. We had not heard from him for about ten years. So I was making enquiries. When we were talking, the post arrived and with it a parcel of books. I perused the letters first and laid aside the parcel. When we were talking about this

G., the parcel was by my side. After talking to Mahadevan, I opened the parcel and found G's letter and photo and books, and in the letter he had written that, though he was in Nepal, yet he was always at my feet. It looked as if, in answer to my question to Mahadevan as to where G. was, G. was saying, 'Here I am (*i.e.*, in the picture) at your very feet'."

The Cocanada party requested Bhagavan to give them *hastha diksha*, or to permit them to touch his feet. Bhagavan only replied as usual, 'Touch with your mind'.

At breakfast, Bhagavan enquired where G. was staying and what he was going to take. It was reported G. had gone for his bath. Bhagavan then said, "He would eat anything. If you give him a quantity of tender *margosa* leaves and a *chembu* of cow's urine, he would breakfast on them. He had lived on things like that."

About 10-30 a.m. S. G. was in the hall showing a picture of a Pasupati image in Nepal and explaining its esoteric significance. A Swami in orange robes, called Jagadiswarananda, from Ujjain arrived this morning and a little after, the letter announcing his coming here, reached Bhagavan. The person was here before the letter.

In the night again G. was telling Bhagavan about Nepal. He said, among other things, "There are three important shrines in Nepal, all very sacred. The King is a very religious man and it is the custom and tradition there for the King not to do anything or go anywhere without first going and taking permission from the gods in these temples. In that State, cow-killing used to be punished with death sentence. Now the sentence is transportation for life. If a bull is beaten and blood appears, the offender will be punished with imprisonment for three months or so. The State has its own coins." Here G. showed some coins to Bhagavan. Mr. Balaram said, "He does *bhajan* with great spirit and enthusiasm. We should have it one day here." G. said, "Oh, yes. I can do even now. No fear, no shyness. So I can sing away. Can we get some tinkling beads (சுஜ்ஜை) for my ankles, and some accompaniment?" Bhagavan also said, "He must have some *sruti* like harmonium, some accompaniment like *mridangam* or *ganjira* and some cymbals (ஜாலரா)." Then the talk drifted to Bhagavan and his party going round the hill in those days. Balaram asked if G. used to do these *bhajans* while resting on the way or during walking. Bhagavan replied, "Oh, he would do his *bhajan* while walking. He would jump from one side of the road to another. He was so full of life and enthusiasm." G. said, "I was much younger then. But I can do it even now." Discussing where and when we should arrange for such a *bhajan* by G. we found out that he would require a big space himself for moving about singing and that it would be better to arrange it in the dining hall.

24-2-46 Morning

About 10-30 a.m. Mrs. Taleyarkhan came near Bhagavan, stood at his feet and asked, "May I say a few words, Bhagavan?" and continued, "I have a great friend, Mrs. W., wife of a prominent official in Los Angeles. In 1942, when I was here, I received a letter from her while I was sitting in this hall. It was a heart-rending letter in which she detailed how her husband fell in love with another woman, got a divorce decree and married the new woman. She was a most beautiful woman, Bhagavan, and they had already a girl about seventeen years old. She was a great society woman and it was impossible that any event of any social importance would take place without her being there. So she felt the grief

immensely and wrote it all. I was moved terribly and keenly felt for her and prayed mentally to Bhagavan for her relief. I wrote back to her, sending her a small photo of Bhagavan, and told her, 'Don't be downcast. Your husband will come back to you. I am now with such and such a great personage. I am sending you a small picture of him. Have it on your table. I shall daily pray to him on your behalf. You too pray to him. You will see that you get relief.' But the friend - what do they know about Bhagavan and such things - was disconsolate. She wrote back, 'What you say is impossible. He won't come back.' I wrote again, 'Nothing is impossible with our Bhagavan. So just go on as I have advised you to do.' And now, Bhagavan, I have her letter by air-mail today that her husband has come back to her and she is going to set up a new home again. She writes, 'The impossible has happened. Your "gentleman" (meaning Bhagavan) has really worked a miracle. Now, I and my husband must come and see him. We want to fly and visit your Master, though the passage costs a lot. Please let me know whether there is a hotel there where we can come and stay'. I have always been praying to Bhagavan for this friend and I am glad Bhagavan has done this for her. I feel so grateful and was moved to tears when reading this letter here now."

I added, "What is there impossible for Bhagavan?" and told Bhagavan, "Only last evening Shroff was complaining to me about his having to go to Delhi. He said, 'It is the hopelessness of the situation that pains me most. There does not seem to be any chance of my coming here again. If I was certain that once in six months or even once a year, I could be visiting here, I would not feel the separation so much. It is the impossibility of it all that worries me'." And I told Shroff the same thing that Mrs. T. told her friend:

"There is nothing impossible at all where Bhagavan is concerned. You may get transferred to Madras. You may grow so rich suddenly as to possess a small aeroplane of your own. What is there that cannot happen by His Grace?"

Mrs. Osborne told Bhagavan, "Kitty has written a letter and in it has sent her love to Bhagavan." Bhagavan, turning to me, said, "She has become shy now. When she was going she made her father come and tell me her message 'I hope Bhagavan won't forget me'. And I told her, 'You don't forget Bhagavan and Bhagavan won't forget you'."

12-4-46 Morning

I told Bhagavan: "Last evening when I went into the town, a lady, who met me on the road, accosted me and asked me if I was doing well. I could not recognise her. She felt offended and told me she also claimed to be connected with Bhagavan. It seems her mother one Unnamalai Ammal was giving milk regularly to Jadaswami when Bhagavan used to frequent Jadaswami's place, that then this Unnamalai Ammal would give milk to Bhagavan also, that her father used to fan Bhagavan, that she herself as a child of two or three had even clung to Bhagavan's back, that her name Rukmani was given to her by Bhagavan and that even now whenever she goes to the Asramam, Bhagavan enquires about her, and so on. I wonder if all this is true." Bhagavan said. "Yes. Yes. I knew the mother who was attending on Jadaswami. I have known this lady from her childhood. She comes here now too. They are a Komutti family. The father died long ago."

Afternoon

A visitor had given Bhagavan a piece of paper on which he had scribbled in pencil a number of questions. When I went into the hall about 3 p.m., Bhagavan was trying to decipher them and turning round to me said, "Here is a question paper."

Question 1: How to get rid of credulousness? The visitor's problem was that he starts with some ideal recommended to him, but when others come and recommend other ideals, he feels inclined to believe them and give up his old ideals.

Bhagavan: Yes. Yes. Our whole trouble is that we are credulous. We believe in everything except the reality. We must give up all our false beliefs, and that is the only thing we have to do. Then the reality will shine by itself.

Question 2: I start with great keenness towards some ideal. But gradually I get slack. What should I do to prevent it, and what is the reason for this happening?

Bhagavan: Just as there must have been a reason for your keenness at one time, there must be a reason for getting slack also later on.

Question 3: There are a number of spiritual teachers, teaching various paths. Whom should one take for one's Guru?

Bhagavan: Choose that one where you find you get *shanti* or peace.

Question 4: What is the best way of dealing with desires, with a view to getting rid of them - satisfying them or suppressing them?

Bhagavan: If a desire can be got rid of by satisfying it, there will be no harm in satisfying such a desire. But desires generally are not eradicated by satisfaction. Trying to root them out that way is like pouring spirits to quench fire. At the same time, the proper remedy is not forcible suppression, since such repression is bound to react sooner or later into forceful surging up with undesirable consequences. The proper way to get rid of a desire is to find out "Who gets the desire? What is its source?" When this is found, the desire is rooted out and it will never again emerge or grow. Small desires such as the desire to eat, drink and sleep and attend to calls of nature, though these may also be classed among desires, you can safely satisfy. They will not implant *vasanas* in your mind, necessitating further birth. Those activities are just necessary to carry on life and are not likely to develop or leave behind *vasanas* or tendencies. As a general rule, therefore, there is no harm in satisfying a desire where the satisfaction will not lead to further desires by creating *vasanas* in the mind.

Question 5: What is the meaning of '*Om*'?

Bhagavan: 'Om' is everything. It is another name for Brahmam.

I was looking into the January issue of *Vision* and came across a story about Kulasekhara Alwar. Having heard during a *kalakshepam* that Ravana had taken away Sita, Kulasekhara identified himself so much with the situation in the story that he thought it was his duty as a worshipper of Rama at once to hasten to Lanka and release Sita, that he ran up and had entered the sea to cross over to Lanka, that then Rama appeared with Sita and Lakshmana showered His grace on him. I remembered another version, that Kulasekhara started on a campaign with his army to succour Rama, that meanwhile the Bhagavatar doing the *kalakshepam,* sensing the situation, passed on at once to Rama emerging victoriously from the battle, killing all his enemies, etc. Bhagavan also thought the version I had in mind was the correct one and that the matter referred to Rama's battle with Khara and Dushana and not with Ravana for Sita.

Bhagavan looked up a history of the Alwars and told us that both incidents are found in Kulasekhara's life. This led me to make the following remark, "Some Maratha Saint also did a similar thing. He leaped up to the roof, I think." Thereupon, Dr. S. Rao asked Bhagavan, "I don't know that story. What is that story?" Thereupon Bhagavan said, "Ekanath was writing the Ramayana and when he came to the portion in which he was graphically describing that Hanuman jumped across the ocean to Lanka, he so identified himself with his hero Hanuman, that all unconsciously he leaped into the air and landed on the roof of his neighbour. This neighbour had always a poor opinion of Ekanath, taking him for a humbug and religious hypocrite. He heard a thud on his roof and, coming out to see what it was, discovered Ekanath lying down on the roof with the cadjan leaf in one hand and his iron stile in the other, and the cadjan leaf had verses describing how Hanuman leapt across the sea. This incident proved to the neighbour what a genuine *bhakta* Ekanath was and he became his disciple."

After a pause, Bhagavan also related, "God appeared in a dream to Ekanath and asked him to go and repair the tomb of Jnaneswar. When Ekanath went there accordingly, he found a contractor ready to do all the work and take payment at the end. The contractor opened a big account, in which all expenses were entered, with the names of all the workmen and wages paid to them. Everything went on systematically and when the work of repairs having been completed, the accounts had to be looked into and the contractor paid his dues, the contractor and his big account book totally disappeared. Then alone Ekanath came to know God was his contractor and did the work. Such things have happened."

25-4-46 Morning

When Bhagavan returned from his stroll about 7-30 a.m. and entered the hall, he said, "As I was getting up the steps to get into he Asramam compound I was saying, 'How is it Dr. T. N. K. has not arrived? If he came by the morning train, he should have arrived by now.' Before I closed my mouth, I find T. N. K. before me. I wonder if it was his being here that made me think of him. I think of him and there he is before me." Then Bhagavan told T. N. K., "It must have been a great inconvenience for you to rush up like this now. These people wouldn't listen to me. They wired to you. They wired to the *sthapati.* The *sthapati* replied he could not come now. They have now sent a man to fetch him. I don't know if the *sthapati* is going to come after all. All this is quite unnecessary. But they won't heed me."

When discussing some days ago the meaning of *dakshina parsam* occurring in "Asal Neevu Evaru", Bhagavan wanted to know if the image of Dakshinamurti in the Madras Museum has its head turned to the right, looking at the heart-centre there. Bhagavan then remarked, "If we write to Dr. T. N. K., he will at once take a photo of the image and send it." Nagamma reminded Bhagavan of this in the hall this morning, soon after Dr. T. N. K. left the hall. So, soon after, I brought Dr. T. N. K. again into the hall and Bhagavan asked him to take and send a photo of the image or images of Dakshinamurti in the Museum. Bhagavan also enquired if the Museum authorities would object. Dr. T. N. K. replied they would not, and that they might even have photos of the image or images already with them. He also wanted to have for reference with him, the sentence in the article describing the image of Dakshinamurti. So I gave him the extract, with a translation in Tamil.

A visitor asked Bhagavan, "When I try to be without all thoughts, I pass into sleep. What should I do about it?"

Bhagavan: Once you go to sleep, you can do nothing in that state. But while you are awake, try to keep away all thoughts. Why think about sleep? Even that is a thought, is it not? If you are able to be

without any thought while you are awake, that is enough. When you pass into sleep, that state, in which you were before falling asleep, will continue and again, when you wake up, you will continue from where you had left off when you fell into slumber. So long as there are thoughts of activity, so long would there be sleep also. Thought and sleep are counterparts of one and the same thing.

Bhagavan quoted the *Gita* and said, "We should not sleep very much or go without it altogether, but sleep only moderately. To prevent too much sleep, we must try and have no thoughts or *chalana* (movement of the mind), we must eat only *sattvic* food and that only in moderate measure, and not indulge in too much physical activity. The more we control thought, activity and food the more shall we be able to control sleep. But moderation ought to be the rule, as explained in the Gita, for the *sadhak* on the path. Sleep is the first obstacle, as explained in the books, for all *sadhaks.* The second obstacle is said to be *vikshepa* or the sense objects of the world which divert one's attention. The third is said to be *kashaya* or thoughts in the mind about previous experiences with sense objects. The fourth, *ananda,* is also called an obstacle, because in that state a feeling of separation from the source of *ananda*, enabling the enjoyer to say 'I am enjoying *ananda*' is present. Even this has to be surmounted and the final stage of *samadhana* or *samadhi* has to be reached, where one becomes *ananda* or one with the reality and the duality of enjoyer and enjoyment ceases in the ocean of *sat-chit-ananda* or the Self."

29-5-46

Bose: When the Upanishads say that all is Brahman, how can we say, like Shankara, that this world is *mithya* or illusory?

Bhagavan: Shankara also said that this world is Brahman or the Self. What he objected to is one's imagining that the Self is limited by the names and forms that constitute the world. He only said that the world does not exist apart from Brahman. Brahman or the Self is like the screen and the world is like the pictures on it. You can see the picture only so long as there is a screen. But when the seer himself becomes the screen only the Self remains. *Kaivalya Navaneeta* has asked and answered six questions about *maya.* They are instructive.

The first question is : What is *maya*? And the answer is : It is *anirvachaniya* or indescribable.

The second question is : To whom does it come? And the answer is : To the mind or ego who feels that he is a separate entity, who thinks : 'I do this' or 'this is mine'.

The third question is : Where does it come from and how did it originate? And the answer is : Nobody can say.

The fourth question is : How did it arise? And the answer is : Through non-*vichara*, through failure to ask : who am I?

The fifth question is : If the Self and *maya* both exist does not this invalidate the theory of Advaita? The answer is : It need not, since *maya* is dependent on the Self as the picture is on the screen. The picture is not real in the sense that the screen is real.

The sixth question is : If the Self and *maya* are one, could it not be argued that the Self is of the nature of

maya, that is illusory? And the answer is : No; the Self can be capable of producing illusion without being illusory. A conjuror may create for our entertainment the illusion of people, animals and things, and we see all of them as clearly as we see him; but after the performance he alone remains and all the visions he had created have disappeared. He is not a part of the illusion but is real and solid.

28-6-46

In the afternoon Khanna's wife appealed to Bhagavan in writing : "I am not learned in the Scriptures and I find the method of Self-enquiry too hard for me. I am a woman with seven children and a lot of household cares, and it leaves me little time for meditation. I request Bhagavan to give me some simpler and easier method."

Bhagavan: No learning or knowledge of Scriptures is necessary to know the Self, as no man requires a mirror to see himself. All knowledge is required only to be given up eventually as notSelf. Nor is household work or cares with children necessarily an obstacle. If you can do nothing more, at least continue saying 'I, I' to yourself mentally all the time, as advised in *Who am I?*, whatever work you may be doing and whether you are sitting, standing or walking. 'I' is the name of God. It is the first and greatest of all *mantras.* Even OM is second to it.

Khanna: The jiva is said to be mind plus illumination. What is it that desires Self-realization and what is it that obstructs our path to Self-realization? It is said that the mind obstructs and the illumination helps.

Bhagavan: Although we describe the *jiva* as mind plus the reflected light of the Self, in actual practice, in life, you cannot separate the two, just as, in the illustrations we used yesterday, you can't separate cloth and whiteness in a white cloth or fire and iron in a red-hot rod. The mind can do nothing by itself. It emerges only with the illumination and can do no action, good or bad, except with the illumination. But while the illumination is always there, enabling the mind to act well or ill, the pleasure or pain resulting from such action is not felt by the illumination, just as when you hammer a red-hot rod it is not the fire but the iron that gets the hammering.

Khanna: Is there destiny? And if what is destined to happen will happen is there any use in prayer or effort or should we just remain idle?

Bhagavan: There are only two ways to conquer destiny or be independent of it. One is to enquire for whom is this destiny and discover that only the ego is bound by destiny and not the Self, and that the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, by realizing one's helplessness and saying all the time : 'Not I but Thou, oh Lord!', and giving up all sense of 'I' and 'mine' and leaving it to the Lord to do what he likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through Self-enquiry or through *bhakti-marga.*

Khanna: Are our prayers granted?

Bhagavan: Yes, they are granted. No thought will go in vain. Every thought will produce its effect some time or other. Thought-force will never go in vain.

10-10-46

This morning, after his usual stroll, Bhagavan arrived in the hall about 7-35 and, sitting on the couch, stretched out his legs. But immediately, he drew them back and folded them saying, “I am forgetting”, recounted yesterday’s incident, and ended, “My conscience pricks me. I cannot keep my legs stretched out in front of all.” Still he kept his legs folded. In the afternoon too, he had not forgotten this and was trying to keep to this new resolve of his. But before the evening he relaxed a bit, as all of us entreated him that it should be given up.

This afternoon, Mr. Subba Rao said that some incidents in Bhagavan’s life had not at all been recorded in any book so far; for instance, he said, nobody knew that Bhagavan was for some time nude, but he found out by reading Bhagavan’s horoscope that he must have been nude for some time. It was then discovered in the Telugu biography the above fact about Bhagavan was mentioned. This led Bhagavan to say, “It is true I was nude for some time in the early days, when I was under the *illuppai* tree in the temple compound. It was not because I had a *vairagya* that I should have no clothing of any sort. The cod-piece I was wearing used to bring on sores where it touched the skin. When the sore became bad, I threw away the cod-piece. That is all. There used to be an old Gurukkal who for the first time arranged for some regular food for me either by supplying some from his house or by sending the *abhisheka* milk from the temple to me. After I had been nude for about a month, this old Gurukkal told me one day, ‘Boy, the Kartigai Deepam is approaching. People from all the 24 districts will be flocking here. Police from all the districts will also be here. They will arrest you and put you into jail if you are nude like this. So you must have a cod-piece.’ So saying, he got a new piece of cloth, made four people lift me up and tied a cod-piece round me.”

Bhagavan also related today that on the morning of the day after his arrival he had his first meal at Tiruvannamalai. Apparently, he ate nothing at all on the first day. He said, “The next day I was walking up and down in the sixteen-pillared *mantapam* in front of the temple. Then a Mauni Swami who used to be living in the old days in the Kambathu Ilaiyanar temple came there from the temple. Another Palni Swami, a well-built man with long matted hair who used to do a lot of service, by clearing and cleaning the temple precincts with the help of a band of *sannyasis*, also came to the sixteen-pillared *mantapam* from the town. Then the Mauni looking at me, a stranger here, being in a hungry and exhausted condition, made signs to the above Palni Swami that I should be given some food. Thereupon the above Palni Swami went and brought some cold rice in a tin vessel which was all black, with a little salt strewn on top of the rice. That was the first *bhiksha* which Arunachaleswara gave me!”

FIVE HYMNS

TO SRI ARUNACHALA

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FROM THE ORIGINAL OF

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Sixth edition

INTRODUCTION

The Five Hymns to Arunachala are the earliest poems of the Maharshi except for a few short verses. They were written about 1914, that is when he was about thirty-five years of age (he was born in December 1879). He was still living in a cave on the hill. Some of his followers who were sadhus used to go into the town of Tiruvannamalai daily to beg for food and one day they asked him to make a song for them to sing as they went. At first he refused, saying that there were plenty of songs already made by the ancient Shaivite saints. They continued to press him, however, and one day he walked round the Hill, composing the first hymn, *The Marital Garland of Letters*, as he went. It tells in glowing symbolism of the love and union between the human soul and God and is among the most profound and moving poems in any language. Although he who wrote it was established in the Bliss of indissoluble Union, it was written for the sake of devotees and expresses the attitude of the soul that still aspires.

The second, third and fourth poems were written at about the same time, and they also adopt the same attitude. Whereas the later poems of the Maharshi are more doctrinal, these hymns are more emotional, expressing more the attitude of devotion and aspiration.

The *Ten (really Eleven) Verses* and the *Eight Verses* are among the very few poems of the Maharshi that were written quite spontaneously without any request. As he himself said when speaking of them:

"The only poems that came to me spontaneously and compelled me, as it were, to write them without any one urging me to do so are the *Eleven (Ten) Stanzas to Sri Arunachala* and the *Eight Stanzas to Sri Arunachala*. The opening words of the *Eleven Stanzas* came to me one morning and even though I tried to suppress them saying 'What have I to do with these words?' they would not be suppressed till I composed a song bringing them in; and all the words flowed easily, without any effort. In the same way the second stanza was made the next day and the succeeding ones the following days, one each day. Only the tenth and eleventh were composed the same day."

He went on to describe in his characteristically vivid way how he composed the *Eight Stanzas*:

"The next day I started out to go round the hill. Palaniswami was not with me for a while but caught me up later. That day, before I got back to Virupaksha, I wrote six of the eight stanzas. Either that evening or the next day Narayana Reddi came. He was at that time living in Vellore as an agent of Singer & Co., and he used to come from time to time. Aiyasami and Palani told him about the poems and he said, "Give

them to me at once and I will go and get them printed." He had already published some books. When he insisted on taking the poems I told him he could do so and could publish the first eleven as one poem and the rest, which were in a different metre, as another. To make up the required quota I at once composed two more stanzas and he took all the nineteen stanzas with him to get them published."[1]

The fifth hymn is of a different nature to the first four. The great Sanskrit poet and devotee Ganapati Sastri, who was a follower of Bhagavan, begged him to write a poem in Sanskrit. Bhagavan replied, laughing, that he scarcely knew any Sanskrit and no Sanskrit metres. Sastri, however, explained a metre to him and repeated his request. When he returned the same evening this hymn had been written in perfect, flawless Sanskrit.

It is to be understood that in all these hymns the word *Arunachala* means God and nothing less. It also, however, means the physical hill of Arunachala in South India where God is peculiarly manifested for the Maharshi and his disciples. From ancient times various spiritual centres in India have represented various paths and modes of doctrine, and Arunachala among them the doctrine of Advaita and the path of Self-enquiry. Although the ultimate doctrine and the supreme and most direct path, this, throughout the ages, has not been the most popular, because for most people it seemed too austere and difficult. The Maharshi attained Realization through a spontaneous act of Self-enquiry, with no human Guru. There is no place to do more than touch upon the mystery of this here. It is sufficient to note that the Maharshi agreed with all other Masters that a Guru is necessary, adding however that the Guru need not necessarily take human form. When he left home as a youth who was already a Sage, Arunachala drew him like a powerful magnet. He went straight there and stayed there for the rest of his life. It was Arunachala that he regarded as his Guru, and these hymns are written to Arunachala, to the Guru, to God Manifested, to the Absolute.

Through the potent Grace of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the path of Self-enquiry was brought within the competence of men and women of this age, was indeed fashioned into a new path that can be followed anonymously in the conditions of the modern world, with no forms or ritual nothing to distinguish a person outwardly from the world wherein he moves. This creation of a new path to suit the needs of the age has made Arunachala the spiritual centre of the world. More than ever, now that he has shed his physical body and is one with Arunachala, the Grace and guidance that emanates from him to those who turn to him and seek his aid is centred at Arunachala. It is the holy place and many are drawn there, both those who were disciples of the Maharshi in his lifetime and those who have come later.

It remains to be said that the literary Tamil in which the hymns were written can be used in an extremely cryptic manner and the first hymn especially abounds in passages which can be understood in more than one manner. In such cases the alternative readings are given.

Before coming to the Five Hymns we print first a verse that Sri Bhagavan wrote on Sri Ganesa, as being an auspicious opening to the poems. After this comes a verse that he wrote on the significance of Arunachala and one on the significance of the beacon that is lighted on its summit every year at the feast of Deepam. This is followed by an extract from the *Skanda Purana* on the glory of Arunachala, which Sri Bhagavan rendered into Tamil verse. only after this follow the Five Hymns.

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[1] *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge* pp. 171-2 by Arthur Osborne, (Rider & Co.)

BENEDICTORY

Arunachala Ramana is the Supreme Being who sports within the lotus-hearts of all beings, beginning with Hari, in the form of consciousness. If one enters, with a heart melting with devotion, the abode in which the Supreme Being is shining, his eye of knowledge will be opened and he will become consciousness itself. The truth will become clear to him.

Note:- This appears as a stray stanza in Sri Bhagavan's Collected Works and it is adopted here as an auspicious introduction to the following Five Hymns.

TO SRI GANESHA

One day in l912 a potter came to the Virupaksha cave with a small image of Sri Ganesa that he had made and presented it to Sri Bhagavan. A disciple suggested that both he and Sri Bhagavan should write a verse to celebrate the occasion, and this is what Sri Bhagavan wrote.

Him who begot you as a child you made
Into a beggar; as a child yourself
You then lived everywhere just to support
Your own huge belly; I too am a child.
Oh Child God in that niche! Encountering one
Born after you, is your heart made of stone?
I pray you look at me!

THE GLORY OF SRI ARUNACHALA

SRI ARUNACHALA MAHATMYA

Shiva said:

3. "Though in fact fiery, my lack-lustre appearance as a hill on this spot is an act of grace for the maintenance of the world. I also abide here as the Siddha. Within me there are many glorious caves filled with all kinds of enjoyments. Know this.

4. "Action naturally binds the entire world. One's refuge (from such bondage) is this glorious Arunachala by seeing which one becomes itself."

5. "What cannot be acquired without great pains - the true import of Vedanta (viz. Self-realization) - can be attained by any one who looks at (this hill) from where it is visible or even mentally thinks of it from afar."

6. "I, the Lord, ordain that those who reside within a radius of three *yojanas* of this place (Arunachala) shall attain union (with the Supreme) which removes bondage even in the absence of initiation, etc."

A MARITAL GARLAND OF LETTERS FOR SRI ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA AKSHARA MANA MALAI

Invocation by Sri Bhagavan

Gracious Ganapati! with Thy (loving) hand bless me, that I may make this a marital garland of letters worthy of Sri Arunachala, the bridegroom!

REFRAIN

Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala Shiva!
Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala!
Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala Shiva!
Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala!

1. Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, O Arunachala!

9. After abducting me (i.e. after destroying my ego) if now Thou dost not embrace me, where is Thy chivalry, O Arunachala?

19. Making me free from faults and endowing me with virtues accept me (as Thy devotee), O Arunachala that shinest as the Guru!

30. Tear off these (worldly) robes, expose me naked, then robe me with the robe of Thy Grace, O Arunachala!

52. O Undefiled, show Thy Grace and unite with my heart so that there may be everlasting joy, O Arunachala!

70. When I merely thought of Thee Thou didst draw me to Thee; who can realize Thy Glory (in Itself), O Arunachala?

94. Didst Thou not call me in? I have come in. Now measure out for me, (my maintenance is now Thy burden). Hard is Thy lot, O Arunachala!

108. O Arunachala! my Loving Lord! Throw Thy garland (about my shoulders) wearing Thyself this one (strung) by me, O Arunachala!

THE NECKLET OF NINE GEMS

ARUNACHALA NAVAMANIMALAI

7. Annamalai! As soon as Thou didst claim me, my body and soul were Thine. Can I then lack anything? (What else can I desire?). I can think only of Thee (hereafter), not of merit and demerit, O my Life. Do as Thou wilt, then, my Beloved, but grant me only ever increasing love for Thy (dear) Feet!

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TEN VERSES ON ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA PATIKAM

9. O Transcendent! I am the first of those who have not the Supreme Wisdom to clasp Thy Feet in freedom from attachment. Ordain Thou that my burden be transferred to Thee and my free will effaced, for what indeed can be a burden to the Sustainer (of the Universe)? Lord Supreme! I have had enough (of the fruits) of carrying (the burden) of this world upon my head, parted from Thee. Arunachala, the Supreme Itself! Think no more to keep me at a distance from Thy Feet!

10. I have discovered a new Thing! This Hill, the lodestone of lives, arrests the movements of anyone who so much as thinks of it, draws him face to face with It, and fixes him motionless like Itself, to feed upon his soul thus ripened. What (a wonder) is this? O souls think upon it and be saved! Such a destroyer of lives is this Arunachala, which shines within the Heart!

11. How many are there who have lost their ego for having thought this Hill to be the Supreme. O men! disgusted with this life of intense misery, ye seek a means of giving up the body. There is on earth a rare drug which without actually killing him, will annihilate anyone who so much as thinks of it. Know that it is none other than this Arunachala.

EIGHT STANZAS ON SRI ARUNACHALA

SRI ARUNACHALA ASHTAKAM

"The Hill which draws to Itself those who are rich in *jnana tapas*[1] is this Arunachala."
(*Annamalai Venba* by Guru Namasivaya, disciple of Guha Namasivaya)

2. "Who is the seer?" When I sought within, I watched what survived the disappearance of the seer (viz. the Self). No thought arose to say, "I saw", how then could the thought "I did not see" arise? Who has the power to convey this in words, when even Thou (appearing as Dakshinamurti) couldst do so in ancient days by silence only? only to convey by silence Thy (Transcendent) State Thou standest as a Hill, shining from heaven to earth.

3. When I approach Thee regarding Thee as having form, Thou standest as a Hill on earth. If with the mind the seeker looks for Thy (essential) form as formless, he is like one who travels the earth to see the (ever-present) ether. To dwell without thought upon Thy (boundless) nature is to lose one's (separate) identity like a doll of sugar when it comes in contact with the ocean (of nectar); and when I come to realize who I am, what else is this identity of mine (but Thee), O Thou Who standest as the towering Aruna Hill?

FIVE STANZAS TO SRI ARUNACHALA

ARUNACHALA PANCHARATNA

1. Ocean of Nectar, Full of Grace, engulfing the universe in Thy Splendour! O Arunachala, the Supreme Itself! be Thou the Sun and open the lotus of my heart in Bliss!

3. He who turns inward with untroubled mind to search where the consciousness of 'I' arises, realizes the Self, and dissolves in Thee O Arunachala! like a river when it joins the ocean.

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GEMS FROM BHAGAVAN

A necklace of sayings by
BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI
on various vital subjects

Strung together by
A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

AUTHOR OF
Day by day with Bhagavan

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1 - Happiness

All beings desire happiness always, happiness without a tinge of sorrow. At the same time every body loves himself best. The cause for love is only happiness. So, that happiness must lie in one. Further that happiness is daily experienced by every one in sleep, when there is no mind. To attain that natural happiness one must know oneself. For that Self-Enquiry 'Who am I?' is the chief means.

2 - The Self and Non-Self

The self and the appearances therein as the snake in the rope can be well illustrated like this. There is a screen. On that screen first appears the figure of a king. He sits on a throne. Then before him on that same screen a play begins with various figures and objects and the king on the screen watches the play on the same screen. The seer and the seen are mere shadows on the screen which is the only reality, supporting all the pictures. In the world also, the seer and the seen together constitute the mind and the mind is supported by or based on the Self.

Questions about the reality of the world and about the existence of pain or evil in the world will all cease when you enquire, 'Who am I?' and find out the seer. Without a seer the world and the evils thereof alleged do not exist.

The world is of the form of the five categories of sense objects, and nothing else. These five kinds of objects are sensed by the five senses. As all are perceived to the mind through these five senses, the world is nothing but the mind. Is there a world apart from the mind?

If the mind, the source of all knowledge and activity subsides, the vision of the world will cease. Just as knowledge of the real rope does not dawn till the fancied notion of the serpent disappears, vision (experience) of the Reality cannot be gained unless the superimposed vision of the universe is abandoned.

That which really exists is only the Self. The world, *jiva* (individual Self) and *Isvara* (God) are mental creations like the appearance of the pearl in the oyster. All these appear at the same time and disappear similarly. The Self alone is the world, the ego and *Isvara*.

3 - Mind

Mind is a wonderful force inherent in the Self.

That which rises in this body as 'I' is the mind.

When the subtle mind emerges through the brain and the senses the gross names and forms are cognized. When it remains in the Heart names and forms disappear .... If the mind remains in the Heart, the 'I' or the ego which is the source of all thoughts will go, and the Self, the Real, Eternal 'I' alone will shine. Where there is not the slightest trace of the ego, there is the Self.

⇦

There is no other way of controlling the mind except as prescribed in the books like the Gita, drawing in the mind as often as it strays or goes outward, and fixing it in the Self. Of course it will not be easy to do it. It will come only with practice or *sadhana*.

God illumines the mind and shines within it. One cannot know God by means of the mind. One can but turn the mind inwards and merge it in God.

4 - "Who am I?" - Enquiry

Thoughts alone constitute the mind; and for all thoughts the base or source is the 'I' thought. 'I' is the mind. If we go inward questing for the source of the 'I', the 'I' topples down. This is the *jnana* enquiry.

Where the 'I' merges, another entity emerges as 'I' - 'I' of its own accord. That is the perfect Self.

There is no use removing doubts. If we clear one doubt another arises and there will be no end of doubts. All doubts will cease only when the doubter and his source have been found. Seek for the source of the doubter, and you find he is really non-existent. Doubter ceasing, doubts will cease.

It is no doubt said in some books that one should go on cultivating one good quality after another and thus prepare for moksha; but for those who follow the *jnana* or *vichara marga*, their *sadhana* is itself quite enough for acquiring all *daivic* qualities; they need not do anything else.

5 - Surrender

To a devotee who was praying she should have more frequent visions of Siva, Bhagavan said, "Surrender to Him and abide by His Will whether He appears or disappears; await His pleasure. If you ask Him to do as you like it is not surrender but command to God. You cannot have Him obey you and yet think you have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how to do it. His is the burden. You have no longer any cares. All your cares are His. Such is surrender. That is bhakti."

7 - Grace and Guru

Contact with *Jnanis* is good. They will work through silence. A Guru is not the physical form. Hence his contact remains even after the physical form of the Guru vanishes.

One can go to another Guru after one's Guru passes away. But after all, Gurus are one, as none of them is the form. Always mental contact is the best.

Sat sang means association with Sat or reality. One who knows or has realized Sat is also regarded as Sat. Such association is absolutely necessary for all. Sankara has said, in all the three worlds there is no boat like sat sang to carry one safely across the ocean of births and deaths.

8 - Self-Realization

It is false to speak of realization. What is there to realize it? The real is as it is, ever. How to realize it? All that is required is this. We have realized the unreal i.e., regarded as real what is unreal. We have to give up this attitude. That is all that is required for us to attain jnana. We are not creating anything new or achieving something which we did not have before. The illustration given in the books is this. We dig a well and create a huge pit. The akasa (space) in the pit or well has not been created by us. We have just removed the earth which was filling the akasa there. The *akasa* was there, then, and is also there now. Similarly, we have simply to throw out all the age long *samaskaras* (innate tendencies) which are inside us. When all of them have been given up the Self will shine alone. Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real state. If we can attain it or be in it, it is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age long *vasanas* (impressions) carry the mind outwards and turn it to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inward. For that effort is necessary, for most people. Of course, everybody, every book says 'Be quiet or still'. But it is not easy. That is why all this effort is necessary. Even if you find one who has at once achieved the *mouna* (silence) or supreme state indicated, you may take it that the effort necessary has already been completed in a previous life. Such effortless and choiceless awareness is reached only after deliberate meditation.

You may go on reading any number of books on Vedanta. They can only tell you 'Realize the Self'. The Self cannot be found in books. You have to find if for yourself.

The whole of Vedanta is contained in the two Biblical statements 'I am that I am' and 'Be still and know that I am God'.

Glimpses of the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

By Frank H. Humphreys, R. F. C.

Prefatory Note

Humphrey's narration of his experiences with Sri Bhagavan is so simple and arresting that the readers find in it an excellent presentation of Bhagavan's teachings - - - *Publisher*

Introduction

This is an impressive and instructive description by a young man (eager in search of Mahatmas for enlightenment) of his visit to, and experiences with Mahatma Sri Ramana Maharshi.

I took to him a bundle of photographs of great men including those of our Maharshi and Ganapathi Muni. I silently placed the bundle before him on his table and quietly went to Mr. L. Clift, another police gentleman whom I was then teaching. When I returned to the writer of this booklet an hour later, he invited me with the words: "There is the likeness of your Guru. Is he not your preceptor? Tell me." Thus saying, he pointed to me the photograph of our Ganapathi Sastriar separated from others. This act of his surprised me. I was caught and I could not hide me or my master. I had regarded (and I do still regard) Ganapathi Sastriar as My Guru.

About the end of 1911, he returned from the hills. One day when I was teaching him Telugu in Vellore, he asked me for paper and pencil and drew a picture of a mountain cave with some sage standing at its entrance and a stream gently flowing down the hill in front of the cave. He said he saw this in his sleep and asked me what it would be. Immediately the thought of our Maharshi, then dwelling in the Virupaksha Cave came to my mind and I told him about Sri Ramana Paramatma. From the day he saw Ganapathi Sastrigal in his dream, he had been asking and urging me to take him to the Sastriar. How he happened to meet Ganapathi Sastriar and how he was taken to the Maharshi, he has himself clearly explained in his book. Subsequently he took several independent trips to our Master whenever there was a doubt to be cleared or a question to be asked.

Now I shall relate what transpired in the presence of the Maharshi during his first visit to him. He saluted the Mahatma and remained in silent prayer and meditation for a few minutes. When permitted to talk, the first question he asked was, "Master, will I, be helpful to the world?" The Mahatma's answer was "Help yourself, you will help the world". The same question repeated had the same reply with observation that he was in the world but not different (separate) from it, nor was it different from him, and that therefore by helping himself, he would help the world - (meaning thereby the oneness of *Jiva* with *Atman*).

The next and the last question was: "Master, can I perform miracles as Sri Krishna and Jesus did?"

This question was met by a counter question: “Were they, at the time when they performed miracles, aware that they were performing miracles?” Mr. Humphreys, after a minute’s silence, replied: “No, Master. They were only the media through which God’s power did its work.” How much importance can be attached to things mystic in nature is vividly explained in this book.

S. Narasimhayya

2 - Frank Meets His First Master

About three months ago, I met in my sleep a great man. I spoke about it to the Telugu Munshi here. The Munshi brought me some pictures. I picked out the man at once from the others. Last Friday, this man was coming through Vellore to go to a Theosophical Conference, at Tiruvannamalai. He does not belong to the Theosophical Society. All Masters work for the common good.

I learned later that he was the first Sanskrit scholar in India, and that is saying something out here where Sanskrit is the language of the Scriptures and every student of wisdom learns it. He knows the sciences inside out, and many languages. You remember how the Apostles suddenly “spoke with tongues.” Well, there are people here, who have known this man all his life, and they know that up till one day, he did not speak a word of Tamil, a very difficult language. Fifteen days afterwards, he was able to give a long lecture in pure Tamil and to read it and write it as well as any of the professors.

I asked him how he achieved this feat and he replied, “By meditation.” Think of that! no book! no grammar! simply meditating on God, as these men know how to, and asking to be taught Tamil.

3 - Frank visits the Maharshi

Then Sastriar told me to look the Maharshi in the eyes, and not to turn my gaze. For half an hour I looked Him in the eyes which never changed their expression of deep contemplation. I began to realize somewhat that the body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost. I could only feel His body was not the man, it was the instrument of God, merely a sitting motionless corpse from which God was radiating terrifically. My own sensations were indescribable.

6 - Franks Version of the Mahatma’s Teaching

The phenomena we see are curious and surprising-but the most marvellous thing of it all we do not realise and that is that one, and only one, illimitable force is responsible for:-

(a) All the phenomena we see,
(b) The act of our seeing them.

Do not fix your attention on all these changing things of life, death, and phenomena. Do not think of even the actual act of seeing them or perceiving them but only of that which sees all these things. That which is responsible for it all. This will seem nearly impossible at first, but by degrees the result will be felt. It takes years of steady, daily practice, but that is how a Master is made. Give yourself a quarter of an hour a day. Keep your eyes open, and try to keep the mind unshakenly fixed on That Which Sees. It is inside yourself. Do not expect to find that “That” is something definite on which the

mind can be fixed easily; it will not be so. Though it takes years to find that "That", the results of this concentration will soon show themselves in four or five month's time-in all sorts of unconscious clairvoyance, in peace of mind, in power to deal with troubles, in power all round-always unconscious power. I have given you this teaching in the same words as the Masters give it to their intimate *chelas*. From now onwards let your whole thought in meditation be not on the act of seeing nor on what you see, but immovably on That Which Sees.

10 - Realisation

Realisation is nothing but seeing God literally. You must read all I write literally. Our greatest mistake is that we think of God as acting symbolically and allegorically, instead of practically and literally.

Take a piece of glass, paint colours and forms on it, and put into a magic lantern, turn on a white light, and the colours and forms painted on the glass are reproduced on the screen. If that light were not turned on, you would not see the colours of the slide on the screen.

So is it with an ordinary man. His mind is like the screen. On it shines the light, dulled and changed because he has allowed the many-sided world to stand in the way of the Light (God). He sees only the effects of Light (God) instead of the Light (God) Himself, and his mind reflects the effects he sees just as the screen reflects the colours on the glass. Take away the prism and the colours vanish, absorbed back into the white light from whence they came. Take away the colours from the slide and the light shines clearly through. Take away our sight the world of effects we see, and let us look only into the causes, and we shall see the Light (God).

A Master in meditation, though the eyes and ears be open, fixes his attention so firmly on "That which Sees," that he neither sees nor hears, nor has any physical consciousness at all - nor mental either, but only spiritual.

We must take away the world, which causes our doubts, which clouds our mind, and the light of God will shine clearly through. How is the world taken away? When, for example, instead of seeing a man you say, "This is God animating a body," which body answers, more or less perfectly, to the direction of God, as a ship answers more or less perfectly to her helm.

11 - Sins

Jesus, the man, was utterly unconscious when he worked His miracles, and spoke His wonderful words. It was the White Light, the Life, Who is the cause and the effect, acting in perfect concert. "My Father and I are One." Give up the idea "I" and "Mine". Can the body possess anything? Lifeless tools are both, unless the Light of God be shining through. These things which we see and sense are only the split-up colours of the One Illimitable Spirit.

12 - Worship

How can you best worship God? Why, by not trying to worship Him but by giving up your whole self to Him, and showing that every thought, every action, is only a working of that One Life (God) - more

or less perfect according as it is unconscious or conscious.

God works perfectly in our unconscious virtuous actions. A Master when instructing is far from any thought of instructing; but to feel a doubt or a difficulty in his presence is to call forth, at once, before you can express the doubt, the wonderful words which will clear away that doubt. The words never fail and the Master with his heart fixed on God, realising perfectly that no action is a personal one, making no claims to have either originated the thought or to have been the means of destroying a doubt, saying never "I" or "Mine," seeing only God in every thought and action, whether they be yours or his, feels no surprise, no especial pleasure to himself in having allayed your doubt. He never desires to feel pleasure. He says:

Who is it that feels pleasure? Why, God.
What is pleasure? Why the appreciation - instinctive or otherwise - of God.
Who is the so-called "I"? I is God.

God is pleasure. If I desire perpetual pleasure, I must forget myself, and be that which is pleasure itself, *viz.*, God.

A Master sacrifices his whole self, let it down as an artificial idea into the Ocean of God Who Is, and Who is, literally, the Material and the Cause of everything, and becomes the embodiment of happiness. Similarly he flings every personal desire aside, even the desire for virtue. He denies it being his own action and attributes it to God, till he becomes the embodiment of that personal virtue he once desired, and no one can come near him without being blessed. He is the embodiment of all virtues. Such is true worship and its results.

Guru Ramana

Memories and Notes

by S. S. Cohen

"“The whole universe is but a tiny ripple on
the infinite ocean of *Sat-chit-ananda* Ramana.
I meditate on Him, the Sublime Indweller of the
Heart-cavity, transcending all thought.”
(*Ramana Gita*)

To
BHAGAVAN
The Dispeller of Ignorance

PREFACE

This book, as its sub-title indicates, contains some of my reminiscences as well as the notes which I took down at odd times during my long residence in Ramanashram.

The memories of a close association with its celebrated Master Sri Ramana Maharshi, lasting for more than fourteen years, are vast, indeed, but the majority, being of spiritual nature, must needs remain unexpressed.

Part I contains these reminiscences - my first impressions of the Master, his spiritual influence on his disciples, the conditions prevailing then in the Ashram, some autobiographical reflections and episodes, etc.

Part II consists of extracts from my notebooks, where from time to time I jotted down the English translation of the Master's answers to questions almost as soon as they were given. They cover practically all the questions which a beginner on this path asks himself and which were actually put to him by me or in my presence.

Part III is the diary which I kept of the last two years of the Master's life. It describes, in particular, the closing scenes of his earthly career as an illustrious member of that divine race of Rishis, who for thousands of years have sanctified this land by their presence and by their sublime teaching of the Absolute. Seekers of whatever cast or creed, race or colour, have found in him their ideal of a perfect Master. With the crystal clear reason of Gaudapada and Shankara, and the peaceful, unwavering devotion (Parabhakti) to the supreme Quest, peculiar to the Vedantic Teachers and the path of *Jnana,* he satisfies both head and heart. Above all, the purity and love which radiate from him ceaselessly shed their beatific influence on all around him, justifying the appellation of "Bhagavan" given to him by his very early devotees when he was still in his teens, in consideration of his rigorous *tapas* and the original knowledge of the Absolute which he exhibited at that tender age.

Vellore
S.S.C.

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Part 1

Retrospect: Arrival

The third of February 1936, early morning, saw my horse-cart rolling on the uneven two-and-a-half-mile road from Tiruvannamalai railway station to Ramanashram. I was led to a small dining room, at the door of which I was asked to remove my shoes. As I was trying to unlace them, my eyes fell on a pleasant looking middle-aged man inside the room, wearing nothing but a *kaupina*, with eyes as cool as moonbeams, sitting on the floor before a leaf-plate nearly emptied, and beckoning me with the gentlest of nods and the sweetest smile imaginable.

I was alone in the Hall with him. Joy and peace suffused my being - such a delightful feeling of purity and well-being at the mere proximity of a man, I never had before. My mind was already in deep contemplation of him - him not as flesh, although that was exquisitely formed and featured, but as an unsubstantial principle which could make itself so profoundly felt despite the handicap of a heavy material vehicle. When after a while I became aware of my environment, I saw him looking at me with large penetrating eyes, wreathed in smiles rendered divinely soothing by their child-like innocence. All of a sudden I felt something fall in my lap and heard the jingling of keys - my keys! I looked up at the Maharshi extremely puzzled. The man - Sri Ramaswami Pillai - who had dropped them through the door behind me came in and explained that he had gone to the railway station on a bicycle and found the station master waiting for him. It appears that during the few minutes that the train had stopped at the station a passenger had providentially entered the very compartment I had vacated, and, seeing the keys on the seat, he picked them up, and, wonder of wonders! ran up to the station master and handed them over to him. The latter by an unusual flash of intuition surmised that the keys belonged to an Ashram visitor, whom he might have seen detrain in the morning, and awaited a claim for them. It was a series of miracles which occurred on my behalf in the short space of barely ninety minutes, of which I was blissfully ignorant, absorbed as I was in the entrancing personality of this magnificent human magnet - Sri Ramana Bhagavan. It is needless to say that from that day Ramanashram became my permanent home.

Yatra: Pilgrimage

Three years, I said, had passed since that *grihapravesham* day, years of great soul-searching, of incessant attempts to penetrate the Master's mind, of reflection, study, meditation, and what not; years of extreme efforts to adjust myself to the entirely new conditions of life, of physical and psychical strain. They were admittedly intense years, in fact so intense, that I then felt that I must quit immediately, and informed the Master accordingly.

"Bhagavan," I said on a day then near my hut, "I feel a strong urge to go on a *yatra* (pilgrimage) to the South - Chidambaram, Srirangam, Rameshwaram ...." but lo! a look on Bhagavan's face struck me forcibly with the thought "*Yatra*! what for? Are you still in doubt?" I instantly remembered his words of long ago: "Where is the room for doubt? and, as if in reply to a verbal question from him, I continued: "No, Bhagavan, now I feel that I need a change for some months, which I intend spending in Hindu holy places." He smiled approval and enquired about the date and time of my starting, and whether I had made arrangements for my stay in the various places I was to visit. Extremely touched

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by his solicitude, I answered that I was going as a *sadhu*, trusting to chance for accommodation.

For three months thereafter I lay on a mat in Cape Comorin, immensely relieved of the mental tension which the Master's physical form had caused me. In solitude I plunged in reflections of his blissful silence and calm response. The stillness of his mind haunted me everywhere I went - in the beautiful, gem-like temple of the youthful Virgin Goddess, on the shores of the vast blue ocean around me and the sand dunes, in the fishing villages and the endless stretches of coconut groves, which ran along the seashore and the interior of the Cape. I felt his influence in the depths of my soul and cried: "O Bhagavan, how mighty you are and how sublime and all-pervasive is the immaculate purity of your mind! With what tender emotions do we, your disciples, think of your incomparable qualities, your gentleness; your serene, adorable countenance; your cool, refreshing smiles; the sweetness of the words that come our of your mouth; the radiance of your all-embracing love; your equal vision towards one and all, even towards diseased stray animals.

Part Two:

Talks

In the first year of my stay I was a keen and close questioner, mainly on the technique of meditation. Bhagavan's answers to these questions I recorded particularly carefully. Some of them appear here under my own initial C., or Mr. C. as that of the questioner. I have classified most of the notes subject-wise and, as far as possible, in chronological order, beginning with the light ones, for the convenience of the reader.

Maya

Of all the aspects of Advaita philosophy that of Maya is the most difficult to understand, still more to explain. Some interpret it as ignorance, others as dream, others still as illusion, and nothing but experience can explain it satisfactorily. In the meantime considerable misunderstanding is created by explanations - the more it is explained, the more obscure it becomes.

C. - It is hard to conceive of God, the formless, giving rise to form.

Bh. - Why hard? Does not your mind remain formless when you do not perceive or think, say, in deep sleep, in *samadhi*, or in a swoon? And does it not create space and relationship when it thinks and impels your body to act? Just as your mind devises and your body executes in one homogeneous, automatic act, so automatic, in fact, that most people are not aware of the process, so does the Divine Intelligence devise and plan and His Energy automatically and spontaneously acts - the thought and the act are one integral whole. This Creative Energy which is implicit in Pure Intelligence is called by various names, one of which is Maya or *Shakti*, the Creator of forms or images.

Meditation

C. - I suppose efforts have to be made in the waking state, which implies that *moksha* can be gained only in *jagrat*.

Bh. - Quite so, awareness is necessary for mind control; otherwise who is to make the effort? You cannot make it in sleep or under the influence of drugs. Also *mukti* has to be gained in full awareness, because the Reality itself is pure awareness.

C. - There seems to be nothing but awareness, for to know anything there must be knowledge - we cannot get over that.

Bh. - Certainly. Subjective knowledge - knowledge knowing itself is jnana. It is then the subject as the knower, the object as the known and the knowledge which connects them.

C. - This last is not clear to me in this case.

Bh. - Why so? Knowledge is the light which links the seer to the seen. Suppose you go in search of a book in a library in pitch darkness. Can you find it without light, although you, the subject, and the book, the object, are both present? Light has to be present to unite you. This link between the subject and the object in every experience is chit, consciousness. It is both the substratum as well as the witness of the experience, the seer of Patanjali.

C. - Is the vibratory movement of the Centre felt simultaneously with the experience of Pure Consciousness, or before, or after it?

Bh. - They are both one and the same. But *sphurana* can be felt in a subtle way even when meditation has sufficiently stabilised and deepened, and the Ultimate Consciousness is very near, or during a sudden great fright or shock, when the mind comes to a standstill. It draws attention to itself, so that the meditator's mind, rendered sensitive by calmness, may become aware of it, gravitate towards it, and finally plunge into it, the Self.

C. - Is the I-I Consciousness Self-Realisation?

Bh. - It is a preclude to it: when it becomes permanent (*Sahaja*), it is Self-Realisation, Liberation.

Part Three:

Diary: Introductory

The years 1948-50 saw the evening shadows gathering and closing on the mortal coil of the Master. Advancing age brought a series of mishaps to it - a fall, a nervous hiccup lasting many days, a clinging rheumatism, and lastly a malignant tumour, which inch by inch ate up the flesh of his left arm, poisoned his blood and, finally, rang down the curtain on a life, purer than which there has never been nor will ever be.

24 June 1949

"On the 24th instant at 10-30 a.m. the Master was dozing. A female squirrel leapt on his couch and bit his thumb which he quickly pulled back and stroked, remarking, 'I'll not feed her.' Other squirrels

crowded on his couch and for half an hour he continued to feed them with cashew nuts, one nut at a time to each. Then he turned to us and, pointing to one of them, said: 'This She-squirrel has been trying to fool me, thinking I do not recognise her, and so shall feed her. Once she comes from this side, once from the other, once from under the couch and once from above it. But I recognise her very well. She shall not have anything,' and laughed. At that the following vague thought crossed my mind: 'Where is the Christ's injunction that if a man slaps you on one cheek offer him the other?'

"Today a squirrel jumped from the window to the couch. The Master looked at it intently. He gave it a nut, then another and addressed it: 'Now go. Have you come to bite me again?' I quickly guessed that that was the guilty squirrel of four days ago and wondered how Sri Bhagavan recognised it and relented. Nevertheless, I asked him if my guess was right, and he confirmed it. After a while the same squirrel came back for more nuts. Usually the Master continues to feed the animals till of their own accord they cease to come. But to this one he refused to give again and, seeing it persisting, he lifted his fan in threat, which made it disappear at once. Then he sat with a pensive look and a faint smile on his face. After a while he turned to my direction, broadened his smile and softly spoke in Tamil in his usual telegraphic brevity to my neighbour:

'Even animals understand a rebuke and, if it is repeated a sufficient number of times, they learn to behave. Some of them are more sensible than some others...' This was immediately translated to me. I laughed, frankly admitted the vague thought I had had on the first day, and added that although I had never doubted Sri Bhagavan's wisdom, that thought needed the explanation, which made the Master nod approvingly."

15 July 1949

Even in a solemn moment like that, when life hung by the flimsiest thread, Sri Maharshi's solicitude for the guests and devotees occupied the first place in his mind; for he hardly rested than he called attendant Satyananda, who had supported his hip-joints in his journey to and from the bathroom, and whispered something to him, which was later explained as his declared desire that the dining routine should not be altered, which implied that he would not have his dinner alone in the *darshan* hall, as he had suspected such a plan was afoot, but as usual in the dining hall with others. The dining hall is situated at a great distance from the *darshan* hall and its southern entrance, by which the Maharshi usually enters, is preceded by seven steep steps. To go there for dinner would compel Sri Bhagavan not only to make the distance on foot, but also cross the terrible threshold of the hall, as well as climb all the seven steps, which is far more than his state of health would permit. A few of his important disciples went to him one after another and begged of him to consent to dine alone in the *darshan* hall where he sat, but he refused. Our hearts were in our mouths when the dinner bell rang at 7-30 p.m. and we saw him preparing to get down and walk. Walk he did, and with firm steps too, but in order to make him avoid the southern entrance, he was requested to enter by the northern one, which had only two easy steps, but he turned down the request by moving to the southern door and climbing the steep steps. He tottered for a while and, seeing the attendants ready to hold him, he stopped, turned to them and said: "If you leave me alone, I would walk far steadier," and entered the dining hall unaided.

14 April 1950

At about 9 p.m., Monsieur Cartier-Brassen, the French photographer, who has been here for about a fortnight with his wife, related an experience of his to me. "It is a most astonishing experience," he said.

"I was in the open space in front of my house, when my friends drew my attention to the sky, where I saw a vividly-luminous shooting star with a luminous tail, unlike any shooting star I had before seen, coming from the South, moving slowly across the sky and, reaching the top of Arunachala, disappeared behind it. Because of its singularity we all guessed its import and then raced to the Ashram only to find that our premonition has been only too sadly true: the Master had passed into *Mahanirvana* at that very minute." Several other devotees in the Ashram and in the town later told me that they too had seen the tell-tale meteor.

15 April 1950

At 6-30 p.m., the body, which by then had received the homage of not less than 40,000 persons was carried in a decorated palanquin reserved for the Deity of the temple to the *samadhi*. Here it was placed in the same *yoga-asana* into a bag made of the finest *khaddar*, which was then filled with pure camphor and lowered into the small area reserved for it. Then the pit was filled to the brim with camphor, salt, and sacred ashes to protect the body from worms and rapid disintegration, and closed with masonry work.

All the English and Tamil papers which arrived this morning (16th April, 1950) from Madras gave wide publicity in banner headlines to the passing of the Maharshi. They also referred to the meteor which had been seen in the sky all over the State of Madras, hundreds of thousands of square miles, at 8-47 on the night of April 14, by a large number of people in different places and reported to the Press. These eye-witnesses had been struck by its peculiar look and behaviour, which led them to ascribe the strange phenomenon to the passing of a great spiritual soul. Such a mass of evidence speaks for itself, if evidence need be.

GURU-RAMANA-VACHANA-MALA

By Who

Publisher's Note

Sri Ramana's words in any shape are always welcome to the intelligent public either in India or elsewhere. The poet-scholar-devotee Sri Muruganar, was a man of retiring disposition and deep understanding. He was a Tamil scholar or rare accomplishments, now leading a saintly life in the neighbourhood of the Asramam. For several years he had been in personal attendance on Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and ever since 1926 in close touch with Him whose profound teachings were written down by him in his own inimitable way in Tamil. These are now made available in English to the interested public by 'Who' (Sri K. Lakshmana Sarma), who himself had been in close touch with Sri Maharshi for over twenty years and whose book Maha Yoga is still a classical text in Ramana literature. The contents of this book associated with these three names will, I am sure, be eagerly read by all.

Publisher

Guru-Ramana-Vachana-Mala

Translation

The original of the present translation of Guru-Ramana-Vachana-Mala is mostly a Sanskrit rendering of selected verses from the Guru Vachakakkovai of Sri Muruganar, which is in Tamil, with a few more added, embodying the oral teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Introductory Verses

1. Obeisance to the unique Being, the One Self in all, namely the serene and unfathomable Bhagavan Ramana, who has no ego and no possessiveness.

2. The compilation of the oral teachings of Bhagavan Ramana, made by the saintly Muruganar, is here rendered into Sanskrit.

3. This work, named Paramartha Dipa, is the essence of the Vedanta and is (hence) worthy to be studied many times over by the seekers of the State of Liberation.

Chapter I - Discrimination

1. The Truth about the World

12. As the dog conceals the stone (of which it is made), when taken to be a (real) dog, and is (seen to be) only stone, and not a dog, when its truth is known, so is this world (in the states of ignorance and of illumination respectively).

13. So long as this world appears, its substance, the Real Self, does not appear; when the world ceases to appear, the Real Self appears as He really is.

2. Desirelessness

29. The seeker of liberation must understand that the truth of desirelessness is the prompt extinguishment of every thought, as and when it arises, in its source (the Heart), by the practice of the Quest.

4. The Truth about Bondage

66. The *jiva* (individual soul) who is called 'I', does not really exist; if he exists at all, then he is just the Supreme Reality, just as the seeming snake is just the rope (in which it appears).

71. This *jiva* who has sprung from the Infinite Being, like a bird springing up from its nest and wandering in the sky (and necessarily returns to its nest), will surely (return and) merge into its Source, namely the Infinite, even in spite of hindrances.

5. Inferential Knowledge

80. When mirage-water serves to quench thirst, and painted fire to cook meals, then deliverance can be had by mere book-knowledge.

6. Devotion

103. God's grace consists in the act that He shines in the heart of every one as the Self; that power of grace does not exclude any one, whether good or otherwise.

7. The Truth of the Guru

125. He that has (himself) crossed the ocean of relativity can (alone) help other men to cross (the same); an unenlightened person elected (as Guru) by another unenlightened one is like a blind guide to another blind one.

143. As a deer seized by a tiger (cannot escape), so a disciple on whom the Guru's gracious looks have rested will never be let go, but will surely be led to the State of Kaivalyam (The State of Liberation).

8. Quest of the Self

148. Oh mind, thou hast already suffered, thinking 'I am a *jiva*;' do not fall into worse delusion by believing 'I am Brahman;' in the Transcendental State there is no one answering to the name of 'I'.

152. The state of liberated Being can be reached only by dying; but dying does not consist in destruction of the body; one should understand that true death is the extinction of the ideas 'I and mine'.

9. The Conduct of the Sadhaka

174. The mightiest *tapas* (mental discipline) is to remain at peace, giving up egotism and the notion of doership (in actions), by the understanding that God does everything.

188. It is better for the *Sadhaka* to be in a worldly position arousing compassion from other men, than for him to be in a state to be envied by them.

Chapter III - Experience

10. Liberation

219. There never was any bondage for the Self who is the only Reality (there is); He is ever free and aware; the one that is bound is the illusory *jiva* (ego).

238. The Supreme Silence that arises as pure Consciousness on the death of the ego, through the mind becoming free of thoughts in the heart, is the transcendental speech.

11. Non-Duality

247A. Various questions and answers are possible in the language of duality, not in the Silence of Non-Duality; thus did Acharya Ramana set forth the transcendental nature of Non-Duality.

12. Consciousness

263. The triad of knower, knowing and known does not exist in the Transcendental State; Consciousness is the very nature of the Self.

275. This Pure Consciousness, which is the nature of the Real Self, is uncaused, eternal, transcendental, the moveless basis of the bits of objective knowledge coming to living beings.

13. The Real Self

287. That Pure Consciousness which is the Reality, and which shines without a break as 'I am I' when the mind becomes calm, is the Supreme Bliss.

299. That sleepless, unwinking Deity who directs the intellects from within, unknown to them, is the Self.

15. The Jivanmukta

312. He whose mind is swallowed by the Light of the Self is not affected as before by anything whatever, though seeing, hearing, smelling, eating foods, breathing and walking (as before).

347. He that meditates on the true nature of the *Jivanmukta* who is identical with Siva as the Self of all through the death of the mind, obtains Experience of the Self.

16. Conclusion

349. Long live Arunachala; long live Sri Ramana; long live His devotees; long live (also) this Paramartha Dipa, called Guru-Ramana-Vachana-Mala.

Hunting The I

by
Lucy Cornelssen

The Setting

There is a certain mountain, belonging to the Eastern Ghats, about 200 km south-west of Madras, named Arunachala, meaning ‘Hill of Fire’ or ‘Hill of Dawn’. The Puranas claim that it is the most ancient mountain on earth. Folklore, legend, fairy-tale? Well, geological research has confirmed the ‘fairy-tale’.

Thus the feet of the Hindus, children of this country, and those of the foreign travellers do not touch merely rocks and sands and mud, but their minds are given to a long and awe-inspiring history of civilisation over many centuries, and their very hearts feel here the touch of a deeper mystery, though wrapped up for ever in the silence of an inscrutable past.

Thousands of Indian legends and parables are at the same time veiling and revealing the living Truth about God, Man and World. In this legend of Arunachala, Brahma stands for buddhi, the reason, Vishnu for ahamkara, the ego of man, Siva for Atman, the secret of man’s true Nature. Neither reason nor ego can, of their own talents, reach the Supreme Atman, the Supreme Self, the true nature of man; they have to submit. Only then the Atman reveals Itself.

Investigation

Is it not our birth right to be happy? It is. Then why have we to struggle and to fight and still miss it? Because of a single error of ours: We do not know ourselves properly, and by that same error everything else is spoiled. Nor do we know what happiness is. Real happiness needs no struggle nor endeavour, no reason nor cause; it is inherent in the real ‘I’. However you and I, we live on a wrong ‘I’, as it were. That is the mistake which has to be removed before we can claim our birthright on real happiness. So says Ramana, the Maharshi. And he advises us to dive deep into ourselves with the question: ‘Who am I?’ It seems that thinking, feeling and willing are functions of the body, or, to be more specific, of its brain, a biologically reacting mechanism which serves the body properly without needing an ‘I’ for that purpose. But still there seems to be an ‘I’, because we are conscious of it vividly even now, at this moment, when it appears to lose its last foothold!

Hold it! Keep very quiet and observe: This ‘I’ does neither think nor will; it has no qualities, is neither man nor woman, has neither body nor mind; it has no trace of the ‘person’ which you had in mind during your previous questions about the ‘I’. It simply is conscious of itself as “I am”. Not ‘I am this’, ‘I am that’; only ‘I am’.... But beware: It’s not you who has this ‘I’ ... Consciousness as an object, but this Consciousness is your real ‘I’!

This attitude of aloofness, of detachment, has to be kept and practised as often as possible throughout the day. Because the moment you are perceiving something and re-acting on it, being interested or

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emotionally involved, positively or negatively, you have covered up the silent, neutral, pure, witnessing 'I' by the reactive aggressive, personal 'I'.

Accordingly the sadhana of hunting the 'I' includes the practice of attention to our own perceiving, with the purpose of cutting it short just before the stage of reacting sets in. In practicing this kind of detachment the seeker will soon get to a state of pure awareness, which is no longer 'perceiving'.

Meditation

If we do not resolve to attack the deadly enemy in every nook and corner of our daily life, we shall never get rid of this ghost which we have pampered unconsciously for so long. But what is the means?

There is only one way to overcome the ghost .... to watch it. Do not fight, do not resist. Only try to watch it, quietly but ceaselessly. In other words, develop an unconcerned witness-consciousness towards men, things and happenings without, but particularly towards yourself within. It means to carry on the calmenss of the mind gained in your meditation to cover your whole day. You will distinctly feel it as an undercurrent of peace and detachment.

Obstacles and Pitfalls

The one which soon will betray itself as a great deposit of obstacles is the so-called mind, with its main qualities, restlessness and dullness. Don't try to attain something! Sadhana is meant to remove only. Deny reality to everything, including yourself. It is not you who realises the Self; the Self reveals only itself. To whom? To Itself only. Don't fight against your 'I'! Every resistance is strengthening the 'I' because the motive-power behind resistance is 'Will'! Don't suppress either! Because a suppressed thought, feeling or intention is bound to rebound! The mark by which this pitfall is recognised is 'I' have realised.... This 'I' can only be a 'wrong I', because it is not the 'I' that realises.

With this idea he gives his 'personal I' a strong chance to develop into a 'spiritual I', which is much worse than his original quite ordinary 'I', strengthened by all his previous spiritual effort. The result is a spiritual pride, the worse the more advanced the sadhaka has become, because his attainments, serve only to confirm his 'right' to be proud of his success.

His is a journey like that in fairy-tales, when the hero has to go through many adventures, to fight against many enemies and even demons, to win the princess at the end. The further he proceeds, the mightier the obstacles. The new and definitive disguise of his ego .... I is 'the Guru', and this last and most powerful pitfall never releases him, because he never recognises that he is its victim. There are nowadays many whose Guru-pitfall caught them even much earlier on their path.

The Snake in the Rope

The real guru is one who has realised the Self.

If you are ready for him, he will meet you without any searching for him on your part. And only then

can you be sure that he is the guru for you.

Even the first quest after the meaning of life is already prompted by the inner, the real Guru. There is a beautiful experience of Moses, preserved in the tradition of Islam. When he complained, "O Lord, where shall I seek to find these?" he heard the answer, "Thou wouldst not seek Me if thou wouldst not already have found Me!" ESP-experience belongs to the 'personal I'. The teachings of the sage of Arunachala revolve around "hunting the 'I'" until it submits. To seek and attain siddhis means to strengthen it. That settles the matter once and for all. Sanyasa is meant for one who is fit. It consists in renunciation not of material objects but of attachment to them. Sanyasa can be practised by any one even at house. Only one must be fit for it (T 588).

It is the sovereign wisdom of this mysterious land, lost in the sea, in the 20th century just as it was milleniums ago, when it was expressed in 'Manu's Law for Sannyasins':

"He should not wish to die, nor hope to live,
But await the time appointed, as a servant awaits his wages.
He must not show anger to one who is angry.
He must bless the man who curses time.
He must not utter falsehood.
Rejoicing in the things of the spirit, calm,
Caring for nothing, abstaining from sensual pleasure,
Himself his only helper,
He may live on in the world, in the hope of eternal bliss".

Thus sannyasa is neither showy, nor brilliant, nor very attractive a path, but just one on which Truth is likely to meet the wanderer, provided he is a true sannyasi.

Awakening

The true Jnana-Sadhana is 'hunting the I' until you reach the mysterious 'I am that I am' by which the Supreme Power revealed itself to Moses (Exodus 3, Verse 14). This method was already known to the ancient sages but later neglected. Ramana Maharshi did not pick it up at random. When he awoke in his Great Experience to the real 'I', the Self, he recognised once and for all that 'personal I' belongs to another dimension of consciousness than the true I. He also recognised that to find its source and hold on the wrong 'I' was the way to get beyond this relative consciousness with the pure Awareness of turiya, that Knowledge which is Be-ing.

Going beyond thinking by jnana, beyond feeling by bhakti, beyond self-willed action by karma marga means going beyond 'I' which was from the very beginning, the birth of a genuine reflexive Identity, a 'wrong I'; it means noting more or less than returning to the Source of Pure Consciousness. Thereafter.... "Your efforts can extend only thus far. Then the Beyond will take care of Itself. You are helpless there. No effort can reach It." (T 197)

JEWEL GARLAND
OF
ENQUIRY

(*VICHARA MANI MALAI*)
OF
BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

INTRODUCTION TO THE ORIGINAL TAMIL VERSION

Of the four human ends, namely *dharma* (virtuous and harmonious life), *artha* (material prosperity), *kama* (desires) and *moksha* (Liberation), Liberation is the most important. There are several Vedantic books in the Sanskrit and Prakrit languages which describe this Liberation which is of the cessation of misery and the attainment of bliss. Among these there is a rare book known as *Vichara Sagaram* written in Hindi by Sadhu Nischaldas, a learned and enlightened (*lit.* established in Brahman) Sage. It has been translated into Tamil, but this Tamil version being rather lengthy, the Maharshi, at the request of the late M. R. Arunachala Mudaliar of Tiruvannamalai, the foremost among the pious devotees of Shiva, made a selection of some of the gem-like thoughts in it. Believing that it would be of use to those excellent and calm aspirants whose minds are not distracted by arguments for and against the different religions, the latter printed them in 1909 under the title *Vichara Sagara Sara Sangraham*. As it is now difficult to obtain this small book, the present book has been brought out under a new name, *Vichara Mani Malai* (Jewel Garland of Enquiry).

Jewel Garland of Enquiry

(*VICHARA MANI MALAI*)

This is a compilation of the salient points extracted by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi from a large volume in Tamil known as Vichara Sagara (Ocean of Enquiry), which itself was a translation from the original in Hindi by Mahatma Nischaldas. On being appealed to by a devotee who complained that the volume in Tamil was too difficult to read and understand, Sri Bhagavan graciously made the following extracts therefrom.

INVOCATION

I am that Brahman which is bliss, which is eternal, effulgent, all-pervasive, the substratum of names and forms, which is not cognized by the impure intellect, but is cognized by the pure intellect, stainless and boundless. That is to say, when one discards the *Jiva* (individual being) of the form *ahamkara* (ego-sense), which is the apparent meaning of the word 'I', what remains merely as the effulgent and conscious *Atman* (Self), which is the implied meaning of the 'I', is Brahman. This can also be understood from the following words of Arunagiriar's experience: "After swallowing me who had the form of 'I' (ego), that Supreme Being remained as mere Self".

THE TEXT

Disciple. Swami, what are the means of putting an end to the miseries of *samsara* like birth and death and of attaining supreme bliss?

Guru. O Disciple! What a delusion! You are always of the nature of bliss. There is not the least trace of the miseries of *samsara* in you. Therefore do not take upon yourself the miseries of birth, etc. You are the conscious Brahman which is free from birth and death.

Disciple. Is not Liberation the cessation of misery and the attainment of supreme bliss? If I am (already) of the nature of bliss how is it possible for me to attain the bliss which is always attained and similarly to get rid of the misery which never existed?

Guru. This is possible just as one can seek and find a bracelet which was on one's arm all the time but which one had forgotten about, and on finding it look upon it as a new acquisition. It is possible as in the case of the serpent which, at no time present in the rope, was mistaken for one, but which seemed to be there and seems to disappear when one discovers that it is only a piece of rope.

Disciple. Will the non-existence of misery and the existence of bliss coexist in one and the same state (*lit.* substance) of Liberation?

Guru. They will. Just as the non-existence of the imagined serpent is the existence of the rope, the non-existence of the imagined misery is the existence of bliss.

Disciple. When the misery of birth, death, etc., is actually experienced how can it be said that it never exists in me?

Guru. Know that the world of birth, death, etc., is an illusory appearance like the serpent in the rope and blueness in the sky, or like dreams, due to your ignorance of your Self which is Brahman.

Disciple. If the world of the waking state comes into existence and falsely appears like dreams through nescience, why should we speak of any distinction between the waking state and the dream state and say that the waking state has relative (empirical: *vyavaharika*) reality while the dream state has only personal (*pratibhasika*) reality?

Guru. Since a dream appears without the help of the appropriate time, space and materials on account of nescience accompanied by the defect (*dosham*) of sleep, it is spoken of as a personal state. Since the waking state appears in the Supreme Self which is free from time, space and materials, owing to nescience alone, it is spoken of as the relative state. They are thus described with reference to the three states of reality (personal, relative and absolute). When we think clearly there is no difference

between them. Nor is there any difference between the waking and the dream states. Undifferentiated consciousness is the only true reality. Whatever is different from it is personal and has nescience as its material cause and consciousness as its basis.

Disciple. How can the individual who is of the form of 'I'-'I' and is numerous and finite and subject to attachment and other forms of misery, be identical with Brahman which is one and all-pervasive, free from attachment and other forms of misery? If the individual and Brahman are the same who is it that acts? And who bestows the fruits of action?

Guru. Although Brahman cannot be identical with the individuality (*jiva*) which is limited to the inner organ (*antahkarana*) and which is the apparent meaning of 'I', it can be with the witness (*sakshi*), which is the implied meaning of the word 'I'. It is the reflected part (*abhasa bhaga*) of the *jiva* which performs action. The reflected part in *Isvara* (God), which is the apparent meaning of the word 'Tat' (Brahman), bestows the fruits of action. There is no difference in the consciousness which is the implied meaning of these words (I and Tat). Nor do these two aspects (*jiva* and *Isvara*) really exist.

Disciple. For whom is this knowledge? For the *jiva* or for the witness?

Guru. Knowledge and ignorance are for the *jiva* alone and not for the witness.

Disciple. Will not the knowledge 'I am Brahman' which arises in the *jiva* which is different from Brahman be false?

Guru. As the immutable Self (*kutastha*) implied in the term 'I' is always one with Brahman, like the pot space and infinite space, it is completely identical with it. As for the *jiva* implied in the term 'I' it can have identity with Brahman 'by removal of obstruction' (*badha samanadhikaranyam*) through negating the idea of *jiva*, just as the man one imagines one sees in a post (in a dim light) becomes one with the post on the negation of the idea of his being a man.

This is the gist of the important scriptural texts.

On hearing this the disciple experienced the direct knowledge of his Self and, after experiencing Liberation while alive, attained Liberation after death.

OM TAT SAT

Sri Ramanarpanamasthu

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KAIVALYA NAVANEETA
(The Cream of Emancipation)

An ancient Tamil classic

Translated into English
by
SWAMI RAMANANANDA SARASWATHI

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We have great pleasure in offering to the devotees of Sri Bhagavan and the students of Vedanta in general, a valuable little classic. This was one of the works very frequently referred to by the Maharshi.

In the absence of any mention in earlier literature on Vedanta in Tamil we can assume that 'Kaivalya Navaneeta' was probably written at least five hundred years ago. It was translated into German and English by Dr. Charles Graul DD of the Leipzig Lutheran Mission and we have in the Ramanasramam Library a book containing these German and English translations and published in 1855, both in Leipzig and London. We have not come across any other English translation so far.

We are confident that this great little book will prove to be of immense help to all sadhaks.

The Publisher.

INTRODUCTION

The *Kaivalya Navaneeta* is a widely known Advaita classic in Tamil. *Navaneeta* means butter. *Kaivalya* or *Revala* is the state in which the soul exists, isolated from all connection with the body etc. From the vast ocean of milk (the *Upanishads* etc.) the great teachers have drawn the milk of wisdom and filled it in pots (ancient texts). Tandavaraya Swami, the author of the *Kaivalya Navaneeta* says that he has extracted the butter from the milk. Those who have obtained this (being fed on the butter of divine wisdom - *Brahma jnana* - and being eternally satisfied) will not roam about feeding on dust (non-real objects of sense).

Verses 175 and 179 contain references to Narayana Desikar of Nannilam, as the preceptor of the author of this work. The author extols the greatness of his parents who had the prophetic insight to give him an appropriate name. Tandava is interpreted in the present context as one who was beckoned to leap across the sea of births as well as one who dances eternally in the delight resulting from divine wisdom.

The two sections of this work are called 'The exposition of the Truth' (*Tattva vilakkappadalam*) and 'Doubts cleared Away' (*Sandeham telitarppadalam*). They explain the basic philosophical principles and clear doubts which are likely to arise in understanding these principles.

In language easy to understand, the author gives a remarkably clear exposition of the tenets of advaita. Its English translation will serve to make it known to a larger circle of readers and thus extend its usefulness.

University of Madras,
19th. July, 1965.
V. A. DEVASENAPATHI,
Professor of Philosophy.

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KAIVALYA NAVANEETA

THE CREAM OF EMANCIPATION

1. Prostrations to the Holy Feet of the Unique Lord who like ether remains as sole witness in the hearts of all beings, whether they are swayed by desire for wealth, lands, and women, or are free from such desire, and who shines as the towering peak over the seven successive spiritual heights, which are in themselves exalted over all other planes (of mind), or in Nannilam, the holiest of the seven holy places!

5. I adore the feet of the holy master who shines forth for ever as the wide Expanse which has no beginning or end or interval, and I proceed to tell you the true nature of the Absolute Being, to explain bondage and liberation so that even those who are too dull to learn the scriptures, may understand.

7. After adoring my master, Venkatesa Mukunda, who is himself ever-free, and who made me his own, I write this *Kaivalya Navaneeta* divided into two parts, the first of which contains a clear exposition of the Truth[1], and the second clears away all doubts arising from the former[2].

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[1] *Tattva-vilakkam* .

[2] *Sandehantelithal.*

THE FIRST SECTION

THE EXPOSITION OF THE TRUTH

8. The Sages say that there are four prerequisites* for realisation of the Truth: (I) *Viveka*: discrimination between the temporary (therefore unreal phenomena) and the permanent (therefore the Reality, *i.e*., the noumenal); (2) indifference to the enjoyment of pleasures here or hereafter; (3) the group of six qualities and (4) the longing for Liberation.

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* Sadhanas

9 & 10. The six qualities are *sama, dama, uparati, titiksha, samadhana* and *sraddha*. Of these, *sama* is control of mind; *dama* is control of the senses; *uparati* is cessation of activities (relating to caste, creed, family etc.); *titiksha* is control of passions, and includes endurance; *samadhana* is, according to the sages, the settling down of the mind to reflect on the Truth, as revealed (by the scriptures and the sages); *sraddha* denotes faith in the master and the scriptures; such are the meanings of the six terms of this category.

14. After eagerly saluting his master, he stood up and sobbed out his heart, saying “O Lord! I have suffered long the torture of worldly life, which is after all so false! Gracious master, save me by tearing off the cords which bind me to the five sheaths, so that my heart may be at peace!”

19 & 20. “Look here, my son! He who has forgotten his true nature is alternately born and dies, turning round and round in the unceasing wheel of time, like a feather caught up in a whirlwind, until he realises the true nature of the Self. If he comes to see the individual self and its substratum, the Overself, then he becomes the substratum, *i.e.*, Brahman, and escapes rebirths. Should you know yourself no harm will befall you. As you asked I have told you this.”

NOTE: The teaching is complete at this point, and indeed in this verse.

51. The question then arises: Whereon does the superimposition rest when the substratum is completely hidden? And how can there be any superimposition if the substratum is not hidden? “(The answer is:) The substratum is twofold, general and particular, of which the general substratum remains continuous and unbroken. Transient superimposition is particular.

52. In the world, the common substratum ‘This is’ can never be veiled; but only the particular identity - ‘This is a rope.’ Similarly with the *jiva*, ignorance* does not veil the substratum - ‘I AM’; but it veils the specific knowledge - ‘I am Brahman’.”

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* The knowledge ‘This is’ persists whether we see rope or snake. it is unbroken continuous and general, whereas there is no knowledge of rope when it is seen as snake, nor of snake when seen as rope. Such knowledge is real when rope is recognised, and unreal when snake is presumed.

72. By the Lord under the sacred banyan tree! speak the truth: You are the unchanging Witness of the gross, subtle and (causal) ignorance, the waking, dream and sleep states, and the passage of time - past, present and future, which endlessly rise and fall, like waves in the ocean of bliss.

80. In the example: ‘This is that Devadatta,’ the man who was seen in another place and on another occasion, and also known as Devadatta, is this man who is seen in this place and on this occasion. Although the time and place are different, a little consideration reveals the man to be the same.

81. Similarly, in the words ‘That’ and ‘thou’, their literal meanings excluded, the Consciousness-Principle is taken as Brahman and the Witness, whose unbroken identity is established by ‘art’, so that Brahman is the Self, and the Self is Brahman.

82. The ether reflected in water in a pot, and in the clouds*, are both of them circumstantial and therefore unreal, whereas the space in the pot and the wide expanse are together one and the same. Similarly all-pervading Brahman and the Witness in the individual being are together one and the same. You must experience it so that you may remain fixed in the realisation: ‘I am the Reality.’

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* The ether is invisible. But the region in which the clouds are, is marked off in our vision. It is therefore said to be the ether reflected in the clouds.

107. Just as the ether though all-pervading seems to be newly opened in a well which is newly dug, so Brahman though ever-present yet appears as if realised afresh by enquiry into the self as taught by a master or the scriptures Therefore, O son, be at peace that we are always the same limitless Being!

108. The whole universe is as unreal as water in a mirage, silver in mother-of-pearl, the city of *Gandharvas* in the air, the dreamland of dream, the blue of the sky, the serpent in a rope, the offspring of a barren woman, the horn of a hare, or the thief in a thick post. O Son! Pure Consciousness is alone real. Do not therefore forget the Self at any moment.

Thus ends the First Section of *Kaivalya Navaneeta*.

SECTION II

DOUBTS CLEARED AWAY

1. "Just as men dig a hole, gently plant a long post in it, fill in earth and ram it in, to fix it firmly so too, I take to clearing away doubts that your mind which has realised the Self as being the Supreme Consciousness may remain unshaken."

44. *Disciple:* "O Shiva in the form of my Master! If these powers and deliverance are together the fruits of *tapas*, then all the sages should possess both, as the ancient sages did. We have known that the ancient sages had these *siddhis* and were also liberated at the same time. Why do not all *jnanis* possess such powers as well?"

45. *Master:* "Of the two types of *tapas*, namely, *tapas* for the fulfilment of one's desires[1] and dispassionate *tapas*[2], the former bestows the powers desired, and the latter wisdom. Each can yield its allotted fruits only. That is the law. The ancient sages had evidently performed both kinds of *tapas*.

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[1] *Sakamya.*

[2] *Nishkamya.*

46. "Sinless son, Janaka, Mahabali, Bhagirata and others got deliverance only. Did they display any *siddhis*? (No). Some of the sages sought *siddhis* only; others sought both *siddhis* and emancipation. These *siddhis* are simply for display and nothing more. They do not make for liberation."

107. *Disciple:* "O master! I do not see the propriety of the statement that all beings are permeated by the single non-dual Self which is all-embracing as Being-Consciousness-Bliss. The existence of the *jivas* is clear because they all say 'I'; Consciousness also is clear because of knowledge which is obvious; why does not Bliss show forth in a similar way?"

108. *Master:* "Son, although there are shape, fragrance and softness together present in the same flower, each of them is cognised by a separate sense only. Otherwise they are not perceived; such is the law of nature. Similarly, though the beatific qualities, Being, Consciousness and Bliss together form the Self, yet the modes vary constantly and give rise to the differences which appear as the world.

109. My son! the three qualities - *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas* - give rise to the three modes - repose, agitation and ignorance respectively. Being, Consciousness and Bliss which are themselves glorious, always remain a homogeneous whole, yet appear different.

110. Bare existence alone is noticed in plants, minerals and the earth which look insentient and are ignorant.

There can be no happiness in the state of disturbance caused by passions, such as lust, which act like poison. But Being and Consciousness are evident in it.

Being, Consciousness and Bliss together become manifest in the state of Peace which is characterised by a stern detachment (from externalities).

Therefore Bliss becomes clear in a peaceful mind rid of ignorance and agitation."

168. *Disciple:* "How should I remain, so that I may experience what you have described as Bliss?"

Master: "If you get rid of that mode of mind which gives rise to the states of waking, dream and sleep, you will remain as your true being and also experience Bliss.

169. If you ask how to control the activities of the mind, rising up from its latencies: Rule over the intellect and senses as your slaves. They will become extinct.

170. Also by gentle control of the breath which blows like bellows, the activities of the mind cease. If you are not inclined to practice this yoga, they will cease if you root out the massive ignorance of the causal body. Then too the mind stops its activities."

171. *Disciple:* "By what means can I root out ignorance, the causal body?"

Master: "The *srutis* can never mislead one. How can there be ignorance if you firmly fix their teaching in your mind: 'I am the all-perfect being in whom the worlds appear'?"

172. *Disciple:* "How can I remain so when I engage in worldly transactions, with wandering mind?"

Master: "There is nothing apart from Me. Whatever is seen, is of Me. I am I who is consciousness which sees all this as fictitious as my dream.

173. If you always remain aware that 'I' am perfect Consciousness, what does it matter how much you think, or what you do? All this is unreal like dream visions after waking. I am all-Bliss!"

174-177. *Disciple:* "I had in my countless past incarnations mistaken the body for the self. High or low, seeing all as a mirage, I have by the grace of my master realised the Self as 'I' and been liberated.

What meritorious work have I done? I cannot describe my good fortune. I am blessed by the grace of my master, Narayana, of Nannilam! In my ecstasy I throw up my cloth in the air, and dance for joy!

How noble have my parents been that they named me Tandava (Dancer) as if they even then foresaw that I would be overpowered by the joy of having realised the Self and therefore dance in ecstasy!

Before whom shall I pour forth this ecstatic Bliss of mine! It rises from within, surges up, fills the whole universe and floods unbounded!

I bow to the lotus feet of the Almighty who was so gracious as to bring me into contact with the master who could teach me the Truth according to the holy texts!

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178 - 179. Such is *vidyananda*. Those who study this work with devotion will realise the high state of repose and be liberated here and now. In order that all may understand clearly *vidyananda*, the true spirit of the Holy books, in Nannilam master Narayana appeared in my *samadhi* and commanded me to make this *Kaivalya Navaneeta* perfect in every detail, and free from defect.

184. Praise, praise to the author of my salvation! He placed on his head the foot of Narayana, the Infinite Lord, who had made him his slave, and who, by means of the process of negation had destroyed what through imposition had arisen as a mere fictitious appearance, and put me in such a condition that I, with eyes of grace, can remain for ever the Spectator.

185. Just as the refreshingly cool water from the holy feet of one's wise master sprinkled on one's head confers all the merits obtained from all the holy places of pilgrimage, so also the learners of this unique work acquire the merits of all the holy books and live as sages in the world.

Letters From and Recollections of Sri Ramanasramam

by
Suri Nagamma

Translated from Telugu by D. S. Sastry

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

It gives us great pleasure in introducing to the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, 31 'Letters from Sri Ramanasramam' by Suri Nagamma (originally, Lekalu in Telugu) which were held back when the English translation was printed. We are sure these will be welcomed by the reading public who have derived pleasure and benefit from the Letters from Sri Ramanasramam.

We are also printing with these, the Recollections of Suri Nagamma, translated from Sri Ramanasramam Smrutulu, from original Telugu. Sri D. S. Sastri has rendered great service to the devotees by translating the text from Telugu to English.

Sri Ramanasramam
12.12.1978

T. N. Venkataraman
President, Board of Trustees.

Letters From Sri Ramanasramam

18. Kindness to Animals

23-5-49

One afternoon in 1946, at 2 pm some savouries prepared in the Asramam were distributed amongst the devotees. A few of them were given to Bhagavan also. Bhagavan ate them, drank some water, went out and came back, when some monkeys came to the window near his sofa. Seeing them, Bhagavan asked his attendants to go and bring some of the savoury preparations, saying, that the monkeys would relish them very much. The attendants returned saying that the people in the kitchen refused saying that they had not prepared enough savouries to feed the monkeys also. "Oho! How did we get them then?" said Bhagavan. "This is ration time," said a devotee. "What if it is ration time? When we have rations, why should they (monkeys) not have rations as well? The problem will be solved if a ration card is obtained for the monkeys as well. They also eat these things with greater relish than we. If they do not have it, why should we have it either? When we are eating, see how those children (i.e., the monkeys) are looking at us," said Bhagavan. Thereupon, they also got their share.

From that time onwards, Bhagavan used to accept things only after the monkeys' share were given to them. It seems there was a practice before of taking out their share first before anything was distributed.

The change that had come about in the interim period disappeared with this reprimand from Bhagavan. In the past, on festive occasions like *Jayanti* and *Mahapuja*, Bhagavan used to see that some food was taken out separately, made into balls, placed in a basket and then taken into Palakothu where he used to sit and personally hand over the balls one by one with great joy to the monkeys. A photo was taken of this event at the time of Bhagavan's *Shashtipurthi* festivities in 1939. The radiance on Bhagavan's face at that time can be seen and appreciated if that photo is looked at.

You know what happened one morning in 1946? Squirrels came on to Bhagavan's sofa for cashew nuts. The nuts, which used to be in the tin near Bhagavan, were exhausted. Groundnuts were given instead. The squirrels would not eat them and began to express their discontent in all possible ways. "We don't have them, my dears. What to do?" said Bhagavan, and tried to cajole them. No. They would not be appeased.

They were crawling over the legs and hands of Bhagavan continuously as a sign of their displeasure. So Bhagavan asked Krishnaswami to go and find out if there was any stock of cashew nuts in the store-room. Krishnaswami went and brought a few nuts. "Is that all?" asked Bhagavan. Krishnaswami said they were preparing *payasam* that night and so they could spare only that much. Bhagavan felt annoyed and said, "I see. *Payasam* will not be less tasteful if the cashew nuts are a little less in quantity than usual. What a pity. These squirrels do not like anything less and they are worrying me. The storekeepers have declined to give cashew nuts saying that they will have to put them into the *payasam*. Who will be worried if there are no cashew nuts in the *payasam*? See how these children are worrying themselves for want of cashew nuts?" With that, the cashew nuts which should have gone into *payasam*, went into the stomachs of the squirrels and also into the tin by his side (for future feeding of the squirrels).

The same evening Dr. Ananthanarayana Rao brought from Madras, 2 visa of cashew nuts, saying that he had brought them for the squirrels. With a smile, Bhagavan said addressing Krishnaswami, "Look at this. They are earning whatever they want. There is no need to beg of you. These cashew nuts are their property. Keep them carefully. Note that they should not be given to the store room. Take care."

One morning in January 1947, at about 9 A.M., Lakshmi, the cow, entered the hall hurriedly with her legs, body and tail full of mud, with blood oozing out of her nose and with a half-severed rope round her neck. She went straight to the sofa where Bhagavan sat. The attendants began saying with some disgust that she had come in with mud on her body. Bhagavan, however, said with affection, "Let her come. Let her come. What does it matter how she comes?" Addressing the cow, he said, "Come, my dear, Please come near." So saying he passed his hand over the body lightly, patted her on the neck and looking at the face and said, "What is this? Some blood oozing!" One of the attendants said, "Recently they had put a rope through her nose."

"Oho! Is that the reason? That is why she has come here to complain to me about it. Is it not very painful for her? Unable to bear the pain, she has come here running to complain to me without even washing her body. What to do? Give her some *iddly* or something," said Bhagavan, evincing great solicitude for her welfare. The attendants gave her some plantains and thus managed to send her out. I went to the kitchen, brought some *iddlies* and gave them to her. She was satisfied and went away to her usual place.

After all of us returned to the hall and sat down, Bhagavan remarked, looking at the attendants, "Do not all of you come to me to relate your troubles? She too has done the same thing. Why then you are vexed with her for coming here with mud on her? When we have troubles, do we consider whether our clothes are all right or our hair is properly brushed?"

There is no need to mention the love and affection Bhagavan has towards the peacocks. Not only is he specially considerate towards mild animals like these; he is equally considerate towards beings like snakes which are also given shelter in the Asramam. Not only is this mentioned in his biography but we ourselves have now and then witnessed it here. I have already written to you earlier about the tiger cubs. Recently an incident happened here about snakes.

As the opening ceremony of the Pathala Linga Temple was fixed for the 4th instant and as several visitors were expected at the Asramam on that account and especially the Governor and his wife, it was felt that the available space would not be sufficient and so, a *pandal* was put up to the right side of Bhagavan's sofa in the Jubilee Hall to accommodate them. A week earlier, i.e., towards the end of April, Krishnaswami arranged that the *pandal* should be used for Veda *parayana* and also for the ladies to sit under. It is after all a new erection; and on all its sides crotons were placed, *khus-khus thatties* were tied and water was sprinkled regularly. Hence the place remained comparatively cool. Some four days after the *pandal* was erected I happened to go there in the afternoon a little earlier than usual. Bhagavan had just gone out and come back. There was nobody near him. I prostrated before him and then sat down under the *pandal*. A big green snake came through an opening between the crotons on the side of Bhagavan's sofa, glided along some distance, got up on to the roof of the *pandal* and settled down comfortably there. I was not frightened in any way and so kept quiet looking at the snake and at Bhagavan. He noticed my feelings and said with a smile, "He has come here because it is cool," I said, "Since how long could he have been here?" Bhagavan replied, "He came here about the same time as I returned here after my mid-day meal. He has been going around the *pandal* and also the crotons. He has been coming here like this for the last three days and going away around 2.30 pm."

I said, "He must be a great soul. He must have come here in this shape to serve Bhagavan when he is alone." As I was saying this, Krishnaswami came in.

Krishnaswami: "I do not know what to do. He is coming here every day. Bhagavan says he should not chase him away."

Bhagavan: "What if he comes? What harm has he done to us?"

Krishnaswami: "He has not done anything to us. But this is a place to which several people come. Is it not risky?"

Bhagavan: "But he goes away at 2.30 pm, doesn't he?"

Krishnaswami: "It is all right now. But during festival days people come in at all times."

Bhagavan: "Oho! That is your fear!" So saying, Bhagavan looked at the snake and at me. I too began

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looking at the snake and at Bhagavan, and, I said, "He must have come here to serve Bhagavan. But if he comes with this cover (meaning the body), there is likely to be some trouble to him from the people in general and from him to the general public."

Bhagavan: "It might be so."

Bhagavan thereupon looked at the snake for a while, steadfastly and graciously. Immediately after that the snake, which was remaining still all the time we were discussing, got down the *pandal* rapidly, went into the flower garden and disappeared. There was no knowing what message he received when Bhagavan gazed at him. The clock struck the half-hour. Devotees began coming in rows and prostrated before Bhagavan. Bhagavan's look thus got diverted and he came back to his normal state. The snake was never seen afterwards.

There are ever so many incidents to show that Bhagavan's abode is a place of safe resort not only for the weaker sex and the poor but also for dumb animals at all times. I shall write to you in another letter some more incidents of this nature.

21. Deceptive Appearances

8-12-49

One afternoon in 1944, when devotees were conversing about sundry matters in Bhagavan's presence, the topic of deceptive appearances and talks came up for discussion. Addressing Bhagavan, a devotee said, "Some people put on all sorts of false appearances to deceive the world."

Bhagavan said, "Yes. Not some, but many. What of that? If people put on false appearances, it is their own minds that get troubled ultimately. They begin to be afraid of what others would think of them and so their minds become their own enemies. If people think of deceiving others by putting on false appearances they themselves get deceived ultimately. They think, 'We have planned and have deceived others and thereby have shown great cleverness.' With pride they practise more and more deceptions. The consequences of their actions will be realised only when the deceptions are discovered. When the time comes, they will collapse as a result of their own deceits."

While all were wondering whom Bhagavan had in mind, Rama Yogi said, "Swami, this reminds me of an incident. I remember to have read somewhere that Bhagavan had once put on *Panganamam* (distinctive caste mark of a Vaishnavaite). Is it true?"

Bhagavan replied as follows: "Yes. That was during the early days of my life on the hill. At that time some Vaishnavaites used to come to me, and at their pressing request I used to put on the *namam*, having nothing to lose thereby. Not only that. Do you know what I did once?

Those were the days when a Kalyana Mandapam was constructed in Arunachaleswara temple. It was *Navaratri* time (*Dasara* Festival). A *bhajana* troupe had arranged in the temple a display of dolls for worship. They pressed me to go with them to see the display. As I was afraid that somebody might recognize me and start doing all sort of services, I put on a *dhoti* of Palaniswami and covered my body with another cloth, put on a *namam* like a Vaishnavaite and went with them. The administrators of the temple knew me well. I wanted to avoid them. They however, recognized me at the gate itself, and came after me saying, 'Swami! Swami! You also have come here to see the Swami? You yourself are a Swami, aren't you?' What to do? I felt I was deceiving myself. I somehow managed to evade

them and get inside but I felt that everyone was looking at me only. I did not see the *Mandapam* nor could I see anything else. I turned back intending to return home unnoticed but the chief amongst the *Archakas* caught me again at the gate. "Swami! Swami! You have come in this dress? Aha! How nice it is, Swami! Please wait." So saying he stopped me; and addressing his assistants, he said, 'You fellow! Bring a garland of flowers. Bring sandal paste. Bring *prasadam*. Our Brahmanaswami has come here putting on the dress of Lord Sri Krishna. It is our great luck.' So saying, they began to shower temple honours on me. I somehow managed to escape their attentions and went away. Later on, I tried a number of times to hoodwink them and somehow go to the temple but invariably they used to recognise me and give me all the temple honours. Thereupon I gave up all further attempts and stopped going to the temple altogether. It is the same with everything. You can stay anywhere without fear, if you are in your real form. If you put on a dress to deceive others, you will be afraid every minute that someone might catch you at your deception and so your mind becomes your own enemy and troubles you," said Bhagavan.

Recollections of Sri Ramanasramam

4. How fortunate is this Sabari!

Sometime in 1946, S. Doraiswamy Iyer came to the Ashram. He was a very successful lawyer practising in Madras, earned a lot of money, gave up practice, donated all the money to the Aravindasram, and lived there as an Ashramite. Off and on, he used to come to Ramanasramam. Once it so happened I was copying in a note book various stotras in Telugu in praise of Bhagavan, when Doraiswamy came into the hall and sat there. He saw how Bhagavan was calling me now and then and giving me instructions about copying the stotras and others in Telugu. Doraiswamy appears to have observed the paternal affection with which Bhagavan was calling me and so when Bhagavan left the hall and when I too was about to leave soon after, he came directly behind me unobserved and began singing the famous *Thyagaraja kirtan*: "How fortunate is Sabari? How fortunate is Sabari!" Startled at the unexpected singing right behind my back, I turned round and found him looking at me smiling. I asked him why he was singing like that. Pointing his hand towards me he said, "Yes, Amma; I am saying how fortunate is this Sabari! Bhagavan does not speak to us even once though we ask him all sorts of questions. In your case Bhagavan himself asks for you saying, 'Where is Nagamma?' and speaks to you every now and then. How luck you are!" I naturally felt very much elated at that.

In 1954 I shifted my permanent residence from the Ashram to Andhra Pradesh and was coming to the Ashram once or twice a year for a few month's stay. On one such occasion, perhaps in 1957, I remained in Bhagavan's hall a little longer than usual and with all thoughts of Bhagavan crowding in on my mind, was going out when all of a sudden I heard a voice from behind similar to Bhagavan's calling "Where is Nagamma?" (Nagamma yedhi?). Startled at that, I looked behind and found Devaraja Mudaliar smiling at me. Noticing the tears that had welled up in my eyes, he said, "Bhagavan used to call you like that, didn't he?" What you have said is perfectly correct. For a fleeting moment I felt it was Bhagavan himself that was calling me. What a delusion! Be it as it may, I have heard those soothing words once again at least through your mouth. What a good day for me! It was only after hearing those words from Bhagavan that Doraiswamy Iyer sang the song 'How fortunate is this Sabari!' Those good days are gone never to return," I said. Mudaliar also felt likewise, and share with me my regrets, being a fellow devotee.

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Letters from Sri Ramanasramam

Volumes 1 and 2

By
Suri Nagamma

Third Edition 1985

Introduction
(To Volume I)

Nagamma had no school education worth mention and does not know any language other than her mother tongue, Telugu. During her early years, owing to domestic calamities and consequent enforced solitude, she studied books of ancient lore and thereby acquired some literary knowledge which resulted in her writing a few books in prose and poetry. When, however, she became an Asramite, she renounced everything including her literary activities. Sitting at the feet of the Master, day in and day out, she felt an irresistible urge to record the discussions devotees were having with Bhagavan and, as she began recording them, found that the work was a sort of sadhana for herself and so began writing them in the shape of letters in Telugu to her brother in Madras. 273 letters were thus written.

I read these letters over and over again on different occasions but never did I realise the depth of wisdom and knowledge contained in the cryptic sayings of Bhagavan until I had to sit up and translate them. I have also found throughout the letters the great trials and tribulations Nagamma had undergone in trying to live up to the high ideals of the Asramam. The letters are a veritable mine of information presented in a simple and easily understandable manner and are well worth a careful study not only by the spiritual aspirant but also by the lay reader.

D. S. Sastri

Volume 1

21st November 1945

(1) The Son is Beholden to the Father

Brother, you have asked me to write to you from time to time whatever striking happens in Sri Bhagavan's presence and what Sri Bhagavan says on such occasions. But am I capable of doing so? Anyway I will make an attempt and beginning this very day. The attempt will succeed only if Bhagavan's Grace is on it.

The day before yesterday being full moon, the usual Deepotsava (festival of lights) was celebrated on a grand scale. This morning Sri Arunachaleswarar started for *giri pradakshina* (going round the hill) with the usual retinue and devotees and accompaniment of music. By the time the procession

reached the Asramam Gate, Sri Niranjanananda Swami (the *Sarvadhikari*) came out with Asramam devotees, offered coconuts and camphor to Sri Arunachaleswarar, and paid homage when the procession was stopped and the priests performed *Arati* (waving of the lights) to the God. Just then Sri Bhagavan happened to be going towards the *Goshala* (cowshed) and seeing the grandeur he sat down on the *pial* near the tap by the side of the book depot. The *Arati* plate offered to Arunachaleswarar was brought to Bhagavan by Asramam devotees and Sri Bhagavan took a little *Vibhuti* (holy ashes) and applied it to his forehead, saying in an undertone "*Appakku Pillai Adakkam*" (The son is beholden to the father). His voice seemed choked with emotion as he spoke. The expression on his face proved the ancient saying "*bhakti poornathaya Jnanam*" (the culmination of Devotion is Knowledge). Sri Bhagavan is Lord Shiva's son. Sri Ganapati Muni's saying, that he is Skanda incarnate, was confirmed. It struck us that Bhagavan was teaching us that since all creatures are the children of *Ishwara*, even a *Jnani* should be beholden to *Ishwara*.

We can never tell how pregnant with meaning are the words of Mahatmas. You ask me to write somehow, but how can I convey the exquisite beauty of his utterances? How can I describe adequately? I wrote in a recent poem that every word that falls from his lips is scripture. Why talk of his words alone? If one has the ability to understand, his very gaze and gait, his action and inaction, inhaling and exhaling - everything about him is full of meaning. Have I the capacity to understand and interpret all this? With full faith in Sri Bhagavan's grace, I shall write to you whatever occurs to me, serving Sri Bhagavan with the devotion of the squirrel to Sri Rama.

29th December 1945

(15) Echamma's Demise

On the night of Thursday the 27th at 2-45 Echamma, who was like a mother to Bhagavan, left her body and attained union with the Almighty at Bhagavan's lotus feet. I feel rather gratified than sorrowful at this news. When I moved from her house to a residence near to the Asramam, she would often say, "I loved you as my child. I thought you would see me out of this world, but you have gone away to a distance. Now you will come to me only after I am dead, to see the body off to the cremation ground, won't you?" When she said this, tears used to well up in her eyes. But it happened just as she had said. I only heard the news of her death, not of her sickness. There is a saying, "The child is firm as a rock, the mother fragile as shellac." I am only sorry it came too true in this case.

You remember on the 25th you and your wife presented her with some clothes and she was busy cooking for guests in the house. That same evening, she was unable to get up and so asked for water and she was given some. After drinking it, she lay quietly and so, all the guests left. I am giving you the details as related by her niece who attended on her. After that drink of water she could not talk or eat, but remained bed-ridden. Next day this news was conveyed to Bhagavan. On the 27th her condition became serious. Telegrams were sent to her relatives. Even though she was almost unconscious she would open her eyes slightly, when anyone called her. At about four in the afternoon one lady wanted to test how far she, was really conscious. So she said, "Food does not appear to have been sent to Bhagavan today." Immediately she heard the word "food" she opened her eyes full and, with an exclamation, cast a questioning look. So as not to disturb her peace of mind, her niece said, "We have

sent it," and she nodded her head in approval. That is real *vrita deeksha* (strict observance of a vow). What can one say of the great mother who would not forget her *kainkarya* (service) to Bhagavan, even though she was in the throes of death!

That is all. At 8 o'clock that evening incoherent sounds were coming out of her mouth, her eyes were glazed and she was clearly in the pangs of death. Her nephew came to Bhagavan and brought the news. The Asramam doctor went there, examined her and declared that there was no hope; and then they performed her jeevaprayaschitham (shriving). Anyway, after the news was conveyed to Bhagavan, she had not much suffering, the breathing became easier and feebler and she passed away at 2-45 a.m. I came to know of her illness on Thursday evening and thought I could look her up the next morning but when I came to the Asramam before starting, I heard this sad news. Bhagavan said to me, "Oh, is she dead? I have been waiting to see when she would get away from all these worldly worries. So she has gone away from all these worries. All right, go there and come back."

I went there along with some devotees. I was overpowered with grief when I saw that the body with the face still undimmed. She was undoubtedly a powerful personality and, when I was here alone in my early days, she was my sole support. Though much against her will, I changed my residence, she used to bring me food, along with that of Bhagavan whenever I was unwell. In accordance with her previous instructions, I bathed her body in Ganges water, smeared it with *Vibhuti* (holy ashes) and put on *rudraksha* beads, and then saw her off on her final journey. All her relatives decided that she should be cremated, not buried.

When I prostrated before Bhagavan at 2-30 in the afternoon, he asked, "How did she die? What did they do?" I replied, "They decided on cremation. Her relatives said that she wished her ashes to be buried in her village and a *samadhi* erected over them with a *tulsi* plant for worship." Bhagavan said, "Yes, yes, that is right. The same was done with Ganapati Sastri and others." After I sat down, Bhagavan said in a consoling manner, "I told her quite a number of times not to worry about this food but to stop it. But no! She was adamant and refused to take food until she had served Swami. Even today food was sent to me on her account." I said, "No more now." "That Mudaliar old lady is still there" said Bhagavan. When he said this I was overcome with grief and said, "Whenever Echamma gave me something to eat, she used to get angry if I did not eat it there and then." By this time my eyes were full of tears, and saying, "Yes, yes," Bhagavan changed the subject. The earthly life of a devotee who for thirty eight years kept this vow as her talisman and worshiped God has now come to an end. Another interesting thing: On the evening of the 27th, after *Vedaparayana* and my usual *pradakshina* (round the hall), when I went in to bow before Bhagavan, I saw him seated motionless in *padmasana*, deeply immersed in *dhyana* and with his hands hanging loose at his side. His eyes were glowing with radiance as if they were two celestial lights and I felt that the spiritual lusture of the universe had come down in a concentrated form in the shape of Bhagavan. I wanted to see it closer and longer but I could not stand the powerful glare and so I merely bowed and came home thinking all the while that there must be some deep significance for that deep meditative state of Bhagavan.

In the night after meals and the subsequent short discourse with Bhagavan at his bedside, Krishna Bhikshu came to my place with a friend. When I enquired of Asramam news, he said that Bhagavan had been deeply self-absorbed with a radiant and distant look the whole evening, and that there must

be something great and unusual about it. We wondered what it could be. Subsequently when we heard the details of Echamma's demise, we found that from 5 p.m. onwards yesterday she was in the throes of death and that at 9 p.m. when the news was communicated to Bhagavan, all her agony ceased and she had a peaceful end of her life. Then we all thought that it was to release this great devotee from her mortal state that Bhagavan had assumed that superb radiant form the previous evening.

Volume 2

14th September 1947

(8) Mother's Gift

Last month, Niranjananandaswami sent a bull born and bred in the Asramam to the Meenakshi Temple, Madurai, as a present. People there named it Basava, decorated it nicely and took a photo of it along with Sri Sambasiva Iyer who had accompanied it. Sambasiva Iyer returned with a copy of the photo besides an old fashioned silk-fringed shawl, some *vibhuti, kumkum* and *prasad* given to him by the Temple authorities.

Due to the great crowd of visitors since August 15th, Bhagavan had been spending the days out in the Jubilee Hall. Sambasiva Iyer came into Bhagavan's presence with the shawl, *vibhuti*, etc. on a large plate. The brahmins who had accompanied him recited a mantra while all of us prostrated before Bhagavan, then rose. Looking at me, Bhagavan said, "Our bull has been sent to the Meenakshi Temple, did you know?" "Yes, I knew," I said. "On the day it was going, I saw it decorated with turmeric, *kumkum* etc, and came to know of the purpose when I asked the cattle-keeper."

Holding the plate reverentially and smearing the *vibhuti* and *kumkum* on his forehead, Bhagavan said, "See, this is Meenakshi's gift." And his voice quivered as he said it. Sambasiva Iyer spread the shawl over Bhagavan's feet, and when Bhagavan, deeply moved, removed it with evident feeling of reverence, the attendants took it and spread it over the back of the sofa. Adjusting the shawl properly with his hands, Bhagavan, looking towards us, said, "Mother Meenakshi has sent this. It is the Mother's gift." And, choked with emotion, he was unable to say more and became silent. His eyes were full of tears of joy and his body beccame motionless. Seeing this, it seemed to me that Nature herself had become silent. When, as a boy, Bhagavan was in Tiruchuli and wept, sitting behind the image of Sahayamba; he alone knows how the Mother consoled him and what hopes she gave him.

Three years ago, the Ashram doctor said that hand-pounded rice would be good for Bhagavan's health. Thereupon the Asramites approached Bhagavan with a request to take such rice, which would be specially cooked for him. When Bhagavan asked them whether the same rice would be served to all, they said that it would not be possible, as the supply of such rice was limited. Bhagavan therefore would not agree to having it however much they tried to persuade him. At last they said that they would use the hand-pounded rice for the daily offerings to the deity in the temple, for which rice is usually cooked separately and they requested Bhagavan to partake of that rice. "If that is so, it is all right. I will take it because it is Mother's *prasadam*," said Bhagavan. And from that day onwards, they have been cooking hand-pounded rice separately and, after offering it to the goddess in the

temple, have been serving it to Bhagavan, giving what was left over to all others in his company.

Last summer, Ramaswami Iyer's son got married and for the occasion there was a feast here. That day, Iyer noticed that there was white rice on the leaves of all, whereas the rice on Bhagavan's leaf was reddish, and he enquired the reason. Bhagavan smiling, said, "This is Mother's *prasadam*. What is wrong with it? It is cooked specially as an offering to Mother." He then related the above incident. He once again said, "This is Mother's gift; I have accepted it only because of that."

Is this not a great lesson to those who say that they have given up visiting temples and such things?

30th November, 1947

(24) Poor Man's Mite

I have already written to you that on the night of the festival of the Holy Beacon, (i.e. the Deepam Festival) when the Beacon at the top of the hill was lighted, we took the permission of Bhagavan and went round the hill. Hitherto, the usual practice had been to go round the hill before the festival, not after. But this time, however we started at night, after the evening meal. There were about a hundred of us. With Bhagavan in our hearts and with the Beacon Light on the top of the hill before our eyes, and with the full moon brightly shining, we started out on foot. Devotees who had had the privilege of accompanying Bhagavan on his walks round the hill in his earlier days, began to tell us about their experiences; "Bhagavan used to sit here"; "here he used to cook"; "this happened here" "Bhagavan told us about this, there". While they were relating such incidents, we did not feel the fatigue of walking, for we were absorbed in the tales. But for the fact that we wanted to get back for the Vedaparayana at 5 a.m., we might only have returned at day-break. As it was, we returned at 3 a.m.

I will now tell you some of the things the devotees told us that night: As we were approaching the Unnamalai tank, a devotee said, "When Bhagavan went round the hill, he used to sit here for some time so that those who were lagging behind might catch up with the party. Let us also sit here and wait for a while". We accordingly all sat there for some time.

"How long ago was it that Bhagavan gave up going round the hill?" I asked.

"Till 1926 Bhagavan used to do it. That was an exhilarating experience," said Kunjuswami, one of the old devotees.

"Why not tell us some of the incidents of those days?" we said. Kunjuswami agreed and began to tell us as follows:

"One day, we all felt like going round the hill with Bhagavan. When we told him, he readily consented and we started that afternoon immediately after food. In was usual for Bhagavan to walk slowly while going round the hill, so Venamma hearing that he had gone and confident that she could catch up with the party in no time, started out with a big basket of provisions.

“We were passing Sona *Thirtham* when Bhagavan noticed Venamma at a distance, approaching, and he said, ‘There, you see, Venamma is coming; someone must have told her and sent her with a basket of food. However much I protest, people will not give up these things. There she is, with a heavy load on her head. All right; this is going to be a punishment for her.’

“So saying, he began to walk fast. Could she overtake him if he walked fast? Let us see. She continued to hurry, panting and fretting all the time, but did not stop walking. Bhagavan continued to walk in this way until we passed the Gautamasram, when we looked back. He could see that she, too, was walking fast, and, his heart melting at the sight, he led us to a mango grove that was nearby the road.

“Standing under the shade of one of the trees, Bhagavan said, ‘We will stop here. There is a well, and if not here, we may not get water anywhere else near. I was hoping that she would give us up, but she could not. She is tired and is panting for breath. What a shame!’ So saying, he sat down.

“Unable to discover our whereabouts, and coming up to the trees, Venamma began anxiously saying, ‘Where has Bhagavan gone? There is no sign of him anywhere’. When Bhagavan heard this, he began laughing, whereupon she traced us to where we were and joined us. After eating what she had brought us, we began our walk again, Venamma now with us. From that day, we named the tree Venamma’s mango tree.

“Bhagavan used to tell us that sometimes he started for pradakshina at night and returned by daybreak. It was the usual thing to start so. Sometimes, however, we would start in the morning, with cooking utensils to cook food at noon either at Sona *thirtham* or at Gautamasram or at Pachyamman Shrine, eat, rest and return to the Asramam in the evening. Before the Asramam grew to its present size, we would go round leisurely, sometimes taking two days, or three days or even a week, camping en route.

“On one occasion, we started to go round in the morning with the intention of returning the same evening. We stopped at the Gautamasram, cooked our food, ate it and after taking some rest, packed all the milk, sugar, buttermilk, etc., that remained and started walking again. As we were approaching Adi Annamalai, Bhagavan began walking off on a side road and very fast. Thinking that he wished to avoid the crowds on the main road, we followed him.

“After going along a path for about half a furlong, we came to a tank. At the edge of the tank and under a tree, sat an old man, his body covered by a blanket and holding a small pot in his hand. This old man, whenever he heard that Bhagavan was coming round the hill, would await Bhagavan’s arrival on the road and bring him something to eat. Not seeing him on the road, and lest the poor man should be troubled at missing him, Bhagavan had made the detour.

“Bhagavan, on seeing him, called him by name and began talking with him very simply. The old peasant prostrated before Bhagavan, then stood with folded hands, saying nothing. ‘What is the matter?’ said Bhagavan, ‘why is it that I do not see you anywhere these days? Are crops and cattle all right. How are the children?’ And then, ‘What is in the pot?’ queried Bhagavan.

“Very hesitantly, the old man said, ‘Nothing particular, Swami. I came to know that you were coming. I wanted to bring something as usual to offer you, but there was nothing in the house. When I asked my old woman, she said, ‘There is ample food in the cook-pot; you can take it to them’. Unable to decide

what to do, I put some of the food into this small pot, but ashamed to face you with only this sort of food to offer you, I was sitting here, Swami.'

"Bhagavan, seemingly very pleased, exclaimed, 'Oh! Cooked food, is it? That is excellent. Why be ashamed? It will be very good. Let me have it'. As the old man was still hesitating, Bhagavan took the pot from him, sat down under a tree and told his followers to unload all the things they had brought. We unloaded accordingly. Bhagavan took out from among the cooking things, a big open mouthed tin-lined vessel into which he put all the food, poured in a lot of water, and mixed it well into a paste with his hand; then from some left-overs amongst our things, he took out some limes and squeezed the juice into the mixture, poured in some buttermilk, and made the whole thing into a liquid. Finally he mixed some salt and dry ginger powder, then took out a tumbler full of the liquid, drank it, and said, 'Oh, this is delicious!' Then looking at us all, he said, 'All of you, mix some sugar with that milk left over and drink it; our luggage will be lighter. I have this food; so what need have I for the milk? This is first rate food for me in this hot weather. It is also very nourishing, and has many other good qualities too. But you wouldn't like it, do drink the milk, and please give my share of it and the sugar to this old man'.

"We accordingly mixed the sugar with the milk and, after giving some to the old man, we drank the rest. Bhagavan was meanwhile talking sociably with the old farmer and taking two or three tumblers full of the liquid preparation saying that it was like nectar. He then said to the old man, 'My stomach is quite full. I feel that I shan't be able to take any food tonight. Take the rest of this liquid food home'. So saying, he gave the remaining food to the old man, who accepted it as though it were nectar. Wiping the tears of joy that were welling up into his eyes, he took leave of us and went off to his cottage.'

"Until recently", I said, "that old man used to come to see Bhagavan every now and then. Vyasa wrote in glowing terms in the Bhagavatam about the beaten rice that Kuchela presented to Lord Krishna. Had he seen this Lord's kindly act, how much more glowingly would he have written!"

Brahmanirvana

The small tumour which showed itself on the left upper arm of Bhagavan in November 1948, began growing from day to day so that by 1-2-1949 it became as big as a marble. The doctor in charge of the Asramam hospital Dr. Sankara Rao, and a retired surgeon Dr. Srinivasa Rao pointed out to Bhagavan and offered to remove it by a small surgical operation. Bhagavan however did not agree to it. As it continued to grow rapidly, the doctors got perturbed and somehow prevailed upon Bhagavan to agree to its removal. Accordingly the first operation was performed on the morning of 9-2-1949.

All the devotees wanted the bandage to be covered so as not to be visible to outsiders. But then, was there an upper cloth to cover it? Was there a shirt to wear? The only thing Bhagavan had was a white cloth half-a-yard wide and three-fourths of a yard long. He tied it around his neck so as to conceal the bandage. Still the bandage was visible through the gaps. When some people who had the courage to ask him, enquired what was the matter, Bhagavan used to reply with a laugh, that he had worn a bracelet on the arm or that a *Lingam* had been born there, or that it was a Swayambhu *Lingam*. Some time later the bandage was removed. People said that the wound was healing up.

Somehow, everyone forgot about it during the bustle of the *Kumbhabhishekam* which took place on

17-3-1949. As soon as the festivities were over all people came to know that the tumour had shown itself again. Some suggested treatment with green leaves and milk of the fig tree. Others brought a medicated plaster and put it on. On 27-3-1949, Raghavachari and other doctors who came from Madras, said that none of those remedies would do and that the tumour must be operated upon again. They left after deciding that a second operation should be performed and promised to come back on 3-4-1949 for the purpose.

I was somehow frightened and in a prayerful attitude, entreated Bhagavan saying, "Why all these operations? Why do you not cure yourself by getting some medicine prescribed by yourself and using it, the same as you did when you had jaundice?"

Bhagavan replied, "They are all reputed doctors. Let their treatment be carried out."

When I said that they had already performed an operation which had been found unsuccessful and enquired why Bhagavan should not have his own treatment, Bhagavan said, "Let it go this time. If it appears again, we will see about it."

On the morning 3-4-1949, while we were discussing about the details of the operation in the presence of Bhagavan, the doctors came. Seeing them, Bhagavan said, "Look. The doctors have come," and began arranging his legs preparatory to getting up. Bhagavan was showing in practice in this matter also his *Upadesa* (teaching): Whatever is to happen will happen and whatever is not to happen will not happen. Bhagavan said with a firm voice, "Yes. That which is to happen will not stop even if we say 'no'." So saying he got down from the couch and went into the hospital. Till about the middle of May 1949, everything went on fairly satisfactorily. But afterwards there was an all round anxiety and worry because when the stitches were removed blood began oozing from the place where the operation had been performed. The tumour had not healed and was clearly exhibiting its malignancy.

As it was suggested that it would do good to expose the tumour to the sun's rays, in June 1949, the doctors used to seat Bhagavan behind the *Goshala* (cow-shed), open the bandage, wash the wound and keep it exposed for some time to the sun's rays. On such occasions, devotees who expressed their fear and anxiety were told by Bhagavan, "See how nice it is! It is like a precious ruby. It has become an ornament to my arm. See how red it is! It is glowing brilliantly with the sun's rays falling on it. Look at it!" And when they saw blood oozing out and remarked about it with great grief, he used to say, "Why worry? Let the blood flow out. It is a ruby, you see. Like the *Syamanathakamani* (a kind of valuable gem) this is also producing gold every day. The only difference is, in that case, the gold that was produced was yellow while in this case it is red. See how much is oozing out." And if any devotees prayed to him to heal himself, he used to say "What have I to do with this?" or "What can I do?"

On 5-7-1949, an old man from Valuvai, a village nearby and a reputed Ayurvedic doctor, started applying the juice of some green leaves and bandage the wound. Before he began the treatment, he saw the wound in all its malignancy and remarked with immense grief. "Oh Bhagavan! How serious this is! Swami, this is cancer. This should not be touched at all. Why did you allow it to be operated on? If I had known it in the beginning, I would have dressed it with green leaves containing medical properties and cured it. It is too late now Swami." When Bhagavan was returning to the hall after

leaving the hospital in the evening of 1-7-1949, his body began to shake and his legs began to falter. He had fever. He somehow reached the hall and squatted on the couch. While we were all alarmed and were anxiously looking at him, Santhamma could not contain herself and, being elderly, and a very old devotee, took the liberty of addressing Bhagavan and said, “Oh, the body!” No sooner had she said this than Bhagavan remarked, “Oh, the body? Why? What has happened? It is shaking. What if it shakes?” So saying, he suppressed the shivering, and looking at his attendants, said with a laugh, “That is Nataraja’s dance. Why should you be afraid? If every day the body is giving you *darshan* in its static form, today it is giving it to you in a dance pose. Why all this anxiety?” So saying, he sat there in dignified silence. The Vedaparayanam was then done.

On 7-8-1949 Dr. Guruswami Mudaliar was here personally to supervise the third operation. I had already written to you that it was from that date that questions and answers in Bhagavan’s presence had become rare. After the final operation was performed on 19-12-1949, Bhagavan did not come into either the new hall or the old hall. He confined himself to the small room opposite to the big hall. After homeopathic treatment was tried *Ayurvedic* treatment began. The Moos (a famous *Ayurvedic* doctor from Kerala) who was treating Bhagavan felt discouraged and on 3-3-1950 he wrote a *stothram* in praise of Bhagavan and arranged for its *parayana* along with *Vishnu Sahasranamam* (thousand names of Vishnu), every day. Some devotees performed *Surya namaskar* (salutation to the Sun) and some began doing *Mrityunjaya Japam* (prayer to Lord Siva, the conqueror of death). Just as he had handed over his body to the doctors to do whatever they liked with it, saying ‘Yes, yes’ he was accepting the offerings of those devotees in the shape of *tirtha* (consecrated water) and *prasadams* (offerings of food to the gods).

After the *Mrityunjaya Japam* was over, the people concerned asked him if they could proceed with the *Mrityunjaya Homam*. He nodded in assent and as soon as they left turned towards Venkataratnam and said, “Extinction of ego and abidance in Self is the *Mrityunjaya Homam*. In *Devikalottaram*, v.16 and v.17, it is stated that one should not get immersed in *mantrams, homams* and such things. Also in *Sarvajnanottaram*, v.35, it is said that abidance in Self itself is the mantra, the *devata*, the *diksha*, the *tapas*, the *homam* and the *dhyana*.” About the same time a lady devotee had *Chandi Homam* performed. Another lady lighted holy candles to appease Sani (Saturn). Some had *Abhisheka* and other *Pujas* performed in Arunachaleswara temple.

On 17-3-1950 Bhagavan had some vomiting with consequent discomfort and so did not take any food subsequently. Hearing that, his sister Alamelu went to him and said, “Oh, Bhagavan! It seems you have not taken anything at all. Today’s *payasam* (pudding) is very tasteful. You have not taken even a drop of it.” Bhagavan however sent her away with some words of comfort.

From the time the cancer showed itself, I always used to pray to Bhagavan whenever I could manage to see him, “Please get yourself cured of this ailment and remain in this world for our sake.” Bhagavan used to console me with some comforting words or other. When the third and the fourth operations were performed and I expressed my fear and anxiety, he used to say that there was no need for worry and there was nothing really seriously wrong. Hence, however serious the ailment was, and however much other people felt anxious and discouraged, I used to think that Bhagavan would hint to me if there was anything imminent. That egoism enveloped my whole being and blinded me to the grim realities of the situation. I was therefore confident that he would get cured ultimately.

⇦ On 19-3-1950 was the Lunar New Year’s Day. From the time I had come here, it had been usual for

me to offer to Bhagavan for his personal wear a *khaddar* towel and a *koupina* and arrange for *bhiksha* in the Asramam that day. As I did not like to give it up this year, I took with me a towel and *koupina* in the evening at about 7 o'clock of 18-3-1950, went into that small room accompanied by our post-master, Raja Iyer. Bhagavan stared at me. I quietly placed the clothes on the table and said the next day was the *Ugadi* (New Year's Day). Bhagavan started at that and said, "Is the *Ugadi* come? Is the *Vikruti* (the name of the new year) come?" There was something strange and perplexing in that voice. And I cannot explain why, but it seemed to forebode something disastrous and it was to me heart-rending. The two attendants stood aghast. I too could say nothing and so mumbled, "I felt it would be inauspicious if I gave up my usual practice." Bhagavan said, "Oh! What is there in that?" and looking at one of the attendants by name Anjaneyalu who was by his side, he said, "Keep those clothes carefully. Nagamma has brought them. Tomorrow it is *Ugadi*, it seems." So saying, in a very gentle manner he gave us leave to go. As the attendants were removing the clothes, I went near the couch and asked Bhagavan, "How is the arm?" Bhagavan said, "What shall I say how it is?" I told Bhagavan, "You must somehow cure yourself." Bhagavan replied, "Ahem. I cannot say anything now." I pleaded with great humility, "How could you say that, Bhagavan?" Perhaps he felt that my hopes would not go unless he told me the bare truth and so looking at me with compassion, he said, "Ahem. Cure? What cure?" I said, "Ayyo! Will it not be cured?" Bhagavan replied, "Ahem. Cure? What cure? How could there be any cure now?" The previous assurance that there was nothing to worry about and nothing would happen - all of them disappeared at that moment and when I heard those words, my whole body shook with fear. My eyes filled with tears and my voice got choked. I wanted to ask about our fate for the future and so was trying to gather some composure of mind and open my lips when someone from the office came in hurriedly on some urgent work. I was startled by that noise and came out without asking what I wanted to ask and slowly retraced my steps to my hut. The next morning I thought of approaching Bhagavan again and ask for his final message, but could not get an opportunity. The resonant voice of Bhagavan that said, "Is the *Ugadi* come?" appeared to me to say, "All is over." With that *Ugadi* the great privilege I had all these years of hearing and enjoying the nectar of Bhagavan's voice ended.

On the evening of 14-4-1950, I went at 6-30 and stood in the queue arranged for an orderly *darshan* of Bhagavan and when I got up on the raised mound opposite the door of the room where Bhagavan was sitting, and stood there for a while with my sight concentrated on him and prayed to him mentally, "Oh Prabho! Won't you for once radiate on me your compassionate look?" Bhagavan's eyes slowly began to open and from those eyes, a mild and compassionate look came on me. That was the last time I had the great fortune of his compassionate look.

At 8-47 that night, Sri Ramana, the embodiment of light and enlightenment, left his mortal coil.

When the mortal body of Gurudev, who was at once my mother, father, Guru and God and who has protected me all these years, ceased to be the abode of that great soul, I remained still as a statue, drowned in inexpressible grief and sorrow.

The writing of these letters was begun on 21-11-1945 and continued uninterrupted all these days through the grace of Bhagavan, and with the end of the Avatar of Bhagavan, I am giving up the writing of these letters.

OM TAT SAT

Maharshi's Gospel

BOOKS I & II

Being Answers of
BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI
to Questions put to Him by the Devotees

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CONTENTS

Work and Renunciation

D. The work may suffer if I do not attend to it.

M. Attending to the Self means attending to the work. Because you identify yourself with the body, you think that work is done by you. But the body and its activities, including that work, are not apart from the Self. What does it matter whether you attend to the work or not? Suppose you walk from one place to another: you do not attend to the steps you take. Yet you find yourself after a time at your goal. You see how the business of walking goes on without your attending to it. So also with other kinds of work.

D. It is then like sleep-walking

M. Like somnambulism? Quite so. When a child is fast asleep, his mother feeds him: the child eats the food just as well as when he is fully awake. But the next morning he says to the mother, "Mother, I did not take any food last night". The mother and others know that he did, but he says that he did not; he was not aware. Still the action had gone on.

A traveller in a cart has fallen asleep. The bulls move, stand still or are unyoked during the journey. He does not know these events but finds himself in a different place after he wakes up. He has been blissfully ignorant of the occurrences on the way, but the journey has been finished. Similarly with the Self of a person. The ever-wakeful Self is compared to the traveller asleep in the cart. The waking state is the moving of the bulls; Samadhi is their standing still (because Samadhi means Jagrat-Sushupti, that is to say, the person is aware but not concerned in the action; the bulls are yoked but do not move); sleep is the unyoking of the bulls, for there is complete stopping of activity corresponding to the relief of the bulls from the yoke.

Or again, take the instance of the cinema. Scenes are projected on the screen in the cinema-show. But the moving pictures do not affect or alter the screen. The spectator pays attention to them, not to the screen. They cannot exist apart from the screen, yet the screen is ignored. So also, the Self is the screen where the pictures, activities etc. are seen going on. The man is aware of the latter but not aware of the essential former. All the same the world of pictures is not apart from the Self. Whether he is aware of the screen or unaware, the actions will continue.

Mind-Control

D. Other thoughts arise more forcibly when one attempts meditation!

M. Yes, all kinds of thoughts arise in meditation. That is only right; for what lies hidden in you is brought out. Unless it rises up, how can it be destroyed? Thoughts rise up spontaneously, as it were, but only to be extinguished in due course, thus strengthening the mind.

D. How can the rebellious mind be made calm and tranquil?

M. Either see its source so that it may disappear, or surrender yourself so that it may be struck down. Self-surrender is the same as Self-knowledge, and either of them necessarily implies self-control. The ego submits only when it recognizes the Higher Power.

D. How is Guru found?

M. God, who is immanent, in His Grace takes pity on the loving devotee and manifests Himself according to the devotee's development. The devotee thinks that He is a man and expects a relationship as between two physical bodies. But the Guru, who is God or the Self Incarnate, works from within, helps the man to see the error of his ways and guides him in the right path until he realizes the Self within.

D. How can I obtain Grace?

M. Grace is the Self. That also is not to be acquired; you only need to know that it exists.

The sun is brightness only. It does not see darkness. Yet you speak of darkness fleeing on the sun's approach. So also the devotee's ignorance, like the phantom of darkness, vanishes at the look of the Guru. You are surrounded by sun-light; yet if you would see the sun, you must turn in its direction and look at it. So also Grace is found by the proper approach you make, though it is here and now.

D. Cannot Grace hasten ripeness in the seeker?

M. Leave it all to the Master. Surrender to Him without reserve.

One of two things must be done; either surrender yourself, because you realize your inability and need a Higher Power to help you; or investigate into the cause of misery, go into the Source and so merge in the Self. Either way, you will be free from misery. God or Guru never forsakes the devotee who has surrendered himself.

Book 2

Self-Enquiry

D. But is it not funny that the 'I' should be searching for the 'I'? Does not the enquiry, 'Who am I?' turn out in the end an empty formula? Or, am I put the question to myself endlessly, repeating it like some mantra?

M. Self-enquiry is certainly not an empty formula; it is more than repetition of any mantra. If the enquiry, "Who am I?" were a mere mental questioning, it would not be of much value. The very purpose of Self-enquiry is to focus the entire mind at its Source. It is not, therefore, a case of one 'I' searching for another 'I'.

Much less is Self-enquiry an empty formula, for it involves an intense activity of the entire mind to keep it steadily poised in pure Self-awareness.

Self-enquiry is the one, infallible means, the only direct one, to realize the unconditioned, absolute Being that you really are.

The Heart is the Self

D. Sri Bhagavan speaks of the Heart as the seat of Consciousness and as identical with the Self. What does the Heart exactly signify?

M. The question about the Heart arises because you are interested in seeking the Source of consciousness. To all deep-thinking minds, the enquiry about the 'I' and its nature has an irresistible fascination.

Call it by any name, God, Self, the Heart or the Seat of Consciousness, it is all the same. The point to be grasped is this, that HEART means the very Core of one's being, the Centre, without which there is nothing whatever.

D. But Sri Bhagavan has specified a particular place for the Heart within the physical body, that it is in the chest, two digits to the right from the meridian.

M. Yes, that is the Centre of spiritual experience according to the testimony of Sages. The spiritual Heart-centre is quite different from the blood- propelling, muscular organ known by the same name. The spiritual Heart-centre is not an organ of the body. All that you can say of the Heart is that it is the very Core of your being, that which you are really identical (as the word in Sanskrit literally means), whether you are awake, asleep or dreaming, whether you are engaged in work or immersed in Samadhi.

D. In that case, how can it be localized in any part of the body? Fixing a place for the Heart would imply setting physiological limitations to That which is beyond space and time.

M. That is right. But the person who puts the question about the position of the Heart, considers himself as existing with or in the body. While putting the question now, would you say that your body alone is here but that you are speaking from somewhere else? No, you accept your bodily existence. It is from this point of view that any reference to a physical body comes to be made.

Truly speaking pure Consciousness is indivisible, it is without parts. It has no form and shape, no 'within' and 'without'. There is no 'right' or 'left' for it. Pure Consciousness, which is the Heart, includes all; and nothing is outside or apart from it. That is the ultimate Truth.

From this absolute standpoint, the Heart, Self or Consciousness can have no particular place assigned to it in the physical body. What is the reason? The body is itself a mere projection of the mind, and the mind is but a poor reflection of the radiant Heart. How can That in which everything is contained, be itself confined as a tiny part within the physical body which is but an infinitesimal, phenomenal manifestation of the one Reality?

But people do not understand this. They cannot help thinking in terms of physical body and the world. For instance, you say "I have come to this Asramam all the way from my country beyond the Himalayas". But that is not the truth. Where there is a 'coming' or 'going' or any movement whatever, for the one, all-pervading Spirit which you really are? You are where you have always been. It is your body that moved or was conveyed from place to place till it reached this Asramam. This is the simple truth, but to a person who considers himself a subject living in an objective world, it appears as something altogether visionary!

It is by coming down to the level of the ordinary understanding that a place is assigned to the Heart in the physical body.

D. How then shall I understand Sri Bhagavan's statement that the experience of the Heart-centre is at the particular place in the chest?

M. Once you accept that from the true and absolute standpoint, the Heart as pure Consciousness is beyond space and time, it will be easy for you to understand the rest in its correct perspective.

D. It is only on that basis that I have put the question about the position of the Heart. I am asking about Sri Bhagavan's experience.

M. Pure Consciousness wholly unrelated to the physical body and transcending the mind is a matter of direct experience. Sages know their bodiless, eternal Existence just as the layman knows his bodily existence. But the experience of Consciousness can be with bodily awareness as well as without it. In the bodiless experience of Pure Consciousness the Sage is beyond time and space, and no question about the position of the Heart can then at all arise.

Since, however, the physical body cannot subsist (with life) apart from Consciousness, bodily awareness has to be sustained by pure Consciousness. The former, by its nature, is limited and can never be co-extensive with the latter, which is infinite and eternal. Body-consciousness is merely a monad- like, miniature reflection of the pure Consciousness with which the Sage has realized his identity. For him, therefore, body consciousness is only a reflected ray, as it were, of the self-effulgent, infinite Consciousness which is himself. It is in this sense alone that the Sage is aware of his bodily existence. Since, during the bodiless experience of the Heart as pure Consciousness, the Sage is not at all aware of the body, that absolute experience is localized by him within the limits of the physical body by a sort of feeling-recollection made while he is with bodily awareness.

Aham and Aham Vritti

D. How can any enquiry initiated by the ego reveal its own unreality?

M. The ego's phenomenal existence is transcended when you dive into the Source wherefrom arises the Aham vritti.

D. But is not the Aham-vritti only one of the three forms in which the ego manifests itself? Yoga Vasishta and other ancient texts describe the ego as having a threefold form.

M. It is so. The ego is described as having three bodies, the gross, the subtle and the casual, but that is only for the purposes of analytical exposition. If the method of enquiry were to depend on the ego's form, you may take it that any enquiry would become altogether impossible, because the forms the ego may assume are legion. Therefore, for purposes of Jnana-vichara, you have to proceed on the basis that the ego has but one form, namely that of Aham-vritti.

D. But it may prove inadequate for realizing Jnana.

M. Self-enquiry by following the clue of Aham-vritti is just like the dog tracing its master by his scent. The master may be at some distant,unknown place, but that does not at all stand in the way of the dog tracing him. The master's scent is an infallible clue for the animal, and nothing else, such as the dress he wears, or his build and stature etc., counts. To that scent the dog holds on undistractedly while searching for him, and finally it succeeds in tracing him.

Likewise in your quest for the Self, the one infallible clue is the Aham-vritti, the 'I-am'-ness which is the primary datum of your experience. No other clue can lead you direct to Self-realization.

D. The question still remains why the quest for the Source of Aham-vritti, as distinguished from other vrittis, should be considered the direct means to Self-realization.

M. The word 'Aham' is itself very suggestive. The two letters of the word, namely (A) and (HA), are the first and the last letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. The suggestion intended to be conveyed by the word is that it comprises all. How? Because Aham signifies existence itself.

Although the concept of 'I'-ness or 'I-am'-ness is by usage known as Aham-vritti, it is not really a vritti like the other vrittis of the mind. Because unlike the other vrittis which have no essential inter-relation, the Aham-vritti is equally and essentially related to each and every vritti of the mind. Without the Aham-vritti there can be no other vritti, but the Aham-vritti can subsist by itself without depending on any other vritti of the mind. The Aham-vritti is therefore fundamentally different from other vrittis.

So then, the search for the Source of the Aham-vritti is not merely the search for the basis of one of the forms of the ego but for the very Source itself from which arises the 'I-am'-ness. In other words, the quest for and the realization of the Source of the ego in the form of Aham-vritti necessarily implies the transcendence of the ego in every one of its possible forms.

D. Conceding that the Aham-vritti essentially comprises all the forms of the ego, why should that vritti alone be chosen as the means for Self-enquiry?

M. Because it is the one irreducible datum of your experience; because seeking its Source is the only practicable course you can adopt to realize the Self. The ego is said to have a casual body, but how can you make it the subject of your investigation? When the ego adopts that form, you are immersed in the darkness of sleep.

D. But is not the ego in its subtle and casual forms too intangible to be tackled through the enquiry into the Source of Aham-vritti conducted while the mind is awake?

M. No. The enquiry into the Source of Aham-vritti touches the very existence of the ego. Therefore the subtlety of the ego's form is not a material consideration.

D. While the one aim is to realize the unconditioned, pure Being of the Self, which is in no way dependent on the ego, how can enquiry pertaining to the ego in the form of Aham-vritti be of any use?

M. From the functional point of view the form, activity or whatever else you may call it (it is immaterial, since it is evanescent), the ego has one and only one characteristic. The ego functions as the knot between the Self which is the pure Consciousness and the physical body which is inert and insentient. The ego is therefore called the Chit-jada granthi. In your investigation into the Source of Aham-vritti, you take the essential Chit aspect of the ego; and for this reason the enquiry must lead to the realization of the pure Consciousness of the Self.

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Moments Remembered

Reminiscences of Bhagavan Ramana

By
V. Ganesan

Foreword

Moments Remembered form a collection of reminiscences which Sri V. Ganesan lovingly culled from his many years of contact with the seniormost devotees of Sri Ramana. Appearing regularly over the last five years in The Mountain Path magazine, devotees would await and enjoy each instalment of the new reminiscences.

Knowing Ganesan quite closely, my husband and I were fortunate to join him during a number of these story sessions. On many occasions we would join a small group of devotees and listen with rapt attention to even the simplest detail of Bhagavan's life. Sitting on the rocks of the base of Arunachala, the temple bells would ring in the distance while the setting sun illumined the evening sky. As the devotee spoke his face would glow with the radiant presence of Sri Ramana. We were effortlessly transported to that Presence and could even smell the incense wafting through the peace of the Old Hall where the story was often set. It is this special transmission of grace which shines through the collected reminiscences in Moments Remembered.

Joan Greenblatt
Ramana Publications
P.O.Box 1326
Sarasota, FL 34230, U.S.A.

4. Darling Ramana

Smt. Subbalakshmi, wife of Dr. M. R. Krishnamurthi Iyer, is a very staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. She described another beautiful incident of Bhagavan's overflowing Grace. One day in the streets a portrait of Sri Seshadri Swami was being taken round in a procession, with the usual playing of pipes and beating of drums. On seeing it, Smt. Subbalakshmi got a strong urge to have a large portrait of Bhagavan in her home and to worship it. She then went inside the house and bolted the door. Soon after, someone knocked at the door. When she opened it, to her great surprise, there was a man holding a big framed photo of Sri Bhagavan! He said that he was coming from Tirupattur, that he was an electrician by profession, and that he was directed to leave the photo there. He added that he would return after paying a visit to the Ashram. I garlanded Bhagavan's photo and was in ecstasy. My children returned from school and seeing the beautiful photo of Bhagavan they also jumped with joy, shouting: 'Bhagavan has come to our house'. When my husband returned home, the children reported to him that Bhagavan had come to their home. He was surprised when I told him that I thought that he had sent the photo through the electrician. When we were at lunch, the person returned from the Ashram. He explained: 'I did some electrical work in Major Chadwick's room. When he offered

money, I pleaded with him to give me instead the large framed photo of Sri Bhagavan, which he did. I was worshiping it in my house, doing regular puja. One day, I got possessed; I was heard shouting: 'Go and give this photo at once to Dr. Krishnamurthi Iyer residing in Avarankattu Street.' My father directed me to you and now I am giving you the photo!' So saying, he went away. The same evening we all went to Bhagavan and told him the whole story. Ramana, the Darling, looked benignly at me and at my family-members, and there reigned only Peace!"

10. Joyful Ramana

Long before Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje got married she presented Bhagavan with a pair of bookends with a specific request that Bhagavan should keep them Himself and not give them away to the office or to any one else. Beside Bhagavan was a rotating bookshelf, and He often referred to the books kept there. Books were heaped above it also. Seeing this Prabhavati Raje brought the bookends and insisted that they should be used there. Years passed; she was married and had to live away from Bhagavan.

Those were the days of Bhagavan's bodily existence. Prabhavati came to offer her homage to her Beloved Master. She joined the long queue and waited for the *darshan*. Bhagavan was very weak but He insisted on giving *darshan* to devotees in spite of the medical advice against it. Each devotee could have only a glimpse of Him before moving on to make room for the next. When Prabhavati stood transfixed Bhagavan was compassionate enough to shower His gracious look on her and simultaneously He directed the look towards the inside of the room. Since she did not understand His gesture He took the trouble of raising His right hand (His left hand was afflicted by sarcoma) and stretched it towards the bookshelf or rather above the bookshelf. The bookends presented by her were there put to good use by Him though many years had rolled by. She was thrilled. How the Master fulfilled even the simplest wishes of the devotee! Not only that. The incident assumes greater importance when we take into account Bhagavan's very bad state of health and the effort it would have cost Him to move and point to the bookends. Prabhavati burst into tears and sobbed. Bhagavan blessed her profusely through His gracious look!

11. Kinder-Far-Than-One's-Own-Mother-Ramana

In the roof of the Old Hall, squirrels would build nests. Once, some new-born squirrels dropped on Bhagavan's sofa. Their eyes remained yet unopened and the size of each baby may not have been more than an inch; they were very red in colour with fresh flesh, absolutely tender to touch. The mother squirrel ignored them. Now what to do? How to feed and attend to such tender things?

The baby squirrels were in the palm of Bhagavan. Bhagavan's face glowed with love and affection for them. While there was a question mark in the faces of those who surrounded Bhagavan, He Himself was happy and cheerful. He asked for some cotton to be brought. He made a soft bed for them. He also took a bit of cotton and squeezed it to such a tiny end, the end portion looked like a sharp pin. He dipped it in milk and squeezed milk into the tiny mouths. At regular intervals, Bhagavan repeated this act of compassion. He tended them with great care and love till they grew up and ran around. They did not run away, only ran around their 'Mother'. Kinder far than their own mother!

12. Lovely Ramana

On another occasion, again when Palani Swami and Perumal Swami had gone to town and when Bhagavan was all alone, a few fierce-looking *bairagis* (wandering *sadhus*) came to Virupaksha Cave. Seeing Bhagavan seated alone they told Him, with vehemence: "We are coming straight from the Vindhya Hills. We had *darshan* of the great *Siddha* there. He has commanded us to bring you over there. So, we are taking you along with us back to Vindhyas, as ordered by the great *Siddha"*. Bhagavan, as usual, remained silent and unmoved. But the *bairagis*, as was their won't, made much noise. Some woodcutters who witnessed this drama went down and told Perumal Swami about the wild-looking *bairagis*. Perumal Swami came and saw them. He then went back to the town, brought a big vessel and tins of oil, put them in front of the ruffians and started gathering fire-wood. The *bairagis* and Bhagavan were astonished at the strange behaviour of Perumal Swami. The former did not know who Perumal Swami was. They enquired who he was and what he was up to. Perumal Swami put the big vessel on the oven and said: "I belong to the next village. I had a vision last night of the great *Siddha* of Vindhyas. He commanded me: 'Go to Virupaksha Cave. You will find some *bairagis* there. They are *Siddhas* too, having great powers. Pour boiling oil on them and they will be alive and untouched by the oil'. To my great surprise when I came to this Cave, as told by the *Siddha*, you were all here. What a fool I was to doubt the holy words of the *Siddha*. Immediately, I rushed to town and brought the vessel and the tins of oil. Would I not incur a curse if I disobey the *Siddha*? When Perumal Swami went inside the cave to put his clothes there, the *bairagis* took to their heels! Bhagavan had a big laugh, and Perumal Swami joined Him.

18. Resplendent Ramana

Sri Ramaswami Pillai narrated this moving incident:

"Miracles did take place in the presence of Sri Bhagavan. Strangely people like me, very close to Sri Bhagavan, never cared to notice anything happening, as we were all so thoroughly absorbed in Him, in His Presence!

"However, I am able to recollect a 'Miracle' that took place. But, please don't expect a display of spectacular *siddhi*. Yet, for me, this happening was a perfect *siddhi*, spontaneously performed by Bhagavan.

"A person from a town near Tiruvannamalai lost the sight of both eyes owing to small pox or severe fever. He was advised that if he went to Sri Ramanasramam, Ramana Maharshi would give him back his eyesight. With an assistant he arrived at the Ashram and was enquiring his way to Sri Bhagavan's Hall.

"A few days back two young doctors had arrived for *darshan* of Bhagavan. They were totally captivated by Him. They were about to leave for Madras in their car. They had taken leave of Him and had just gone up to their car when they had an urge to have one more glimpse of Sri Bhagavan and so returned to the Old Hall. Meanwhile the blind man had entered the Hall and was praying to Sri Bhagavan that his eyesight be somehow restored by His Grace. Bhagavan was listening to everything, but kept absolutely silent. The doctors who had witnessed this, voluntarily offered to take the blind

man in their car to Madras and treat him. So the blind man went with them eventually to Madras.

"After some months when I was one day in Bhagavan's Hall a man came and prostrated to Him. He happily expressed great gratitude to Bhagavan for having restored his sight in one eye. The doctors, so he reported, took special care of him and did their best but could restore sight only in one eye. Bhagavan, again, listened to him unmoved, as if He had nothing to do with it!

"This is the natural way Bhagavan performed miracles. Rather, in His Presence plenty of miracles occurred daily, but who cared to pay any attention to *siddhis*, which, after all, are only fleeting experiences?"

19. Supreme Ramana

Sri Kunju Swami narrated the following:

"Sri Bhagavan used to go into the kitchen by 4 a.m. and start cutting vegetables; one or two of us would also join and help. Sometime the amount of vegetables used to startle us. Bhagavan managed to cut much more and more quickly than the rest of us. "At such times we would look up at the clock in our impatience to finish the job and try and have another nap. Bhagavan would sense our impatience and say: 'Why do you look at the clock?' We tried to bluff Bhagavan saying: 'If only we could complete the work before 5, we could meditate for an hour.' Bhagavan would mildly retort: 'The allotted work has to be completed in time. Other thoughts are obstacles, not the amount of work. Doing the allotted work in time is itself meditation. Go ahead and do the job with full attention.' Sri Bhagavan thus taught us the importance of right, honest work".

22. Victorious Ramana

I had to be away from the Ashram for nearly two months and when I returned I saw Sri Cohen in a much worse condition and confined to a wheel-chair. His talk was no longer coherent: "See, Ganesan, I am maimed. Yet, the management has suddenly shifted me to a room on the seventh floor and there is no water there. What can I do?" — "They say they have given me an exclusive room for myself, but see, in the night nearly 12 people sleep here, squatting around me." — "Don't think there is only one Kannan (servant), there are nine Kannans, all looking alike!"

I cried on seeing his pathetic condition and told Him: "Mr. Cohen! You are the most intelligent *sadhak* I have met. Why are you talking so incoherently?" He then adjusted himself and squarely looked at my face and said: "When the body becomes old, you lose control over it. And so over the mind also. But you are not the body and you are not the mind! So, don't give any importance to how the body or the mind behaves. They are not 'me'." I was astounded when he said that since just a few minutes back he was talking sheer nonsense! Then, I asked him "If you are not the mind nor the body, who is speaking to me? Who are you? In which state are you, now?"

"I am pure spirit, witnessing what takes place through the body and mind. I have nothing to do with them. I am in the presence of my Master: Guru Ramana, enjoying His benign and blissful presence! I

am pure ananda!” As he uttered these words I saw a different Mr. Cohen, the one we had known for years with all his brightness and serenity.

After some time, he again started talking incoherently. It was a great revelation, a clinical laboratory demonstration of the fact ‘I-am-not-the-body-mind’!

While Mr. Cohen thus saw the light in the midst of darkness, Mr. Chadwick saw life in the face of death. Major Chadwick was admitted in the C.M.C. Hospital in Vellore. His tongue had swollen so much that it filled the entire mouth, preventing him from even making noises. The doctors put questions to him and he could not reply. His end was nearing. A few devotees from the Ashram went to Vellore to see him and comfort him. Surprisingly, Sri Chadwick, started speaking to them: “Today is Easter!” he said. When it was pointed out to him that Easter was a few days hence, he clearly answered them, in his usual loud, clear voice: “Yes! I know. But, for me, today is Easter!”

Yes! That was the day of resurrection for this Ramana *bhakta*. Who spoke those words but the Spirit within?

When Mr. Arthur Osborne was in Bangalore and the end near, he could not speak at all. As a ritual farewell Mrs. Lucia Osborne went round (clock-wise) the prostrate body of her beloved husband. Suddenly, she heard distinctly in her husband’s voice: “Thank you!”. Who spoke those words if not His Self?

Spiritual being beyond name and form, mind and body, is our real nature, affirms Victorious Ramana, Conquerer of Death.

My Life at Sri Ramanasramam

By Suri Nagamma
Translated from Telugu by D. S. Sastri

PREFACE

From a perusal of the present book My Life at Sri Ramanasramam it will be noted that Nagamma's early life was full of trials and tribulations. She lost her father when she was four years of age, her mother when she was ten and her husband when she was twelve. As a result of the series of calamities she got drowned in an ocean of sorrow and confined herself to a small room in her parent's house rarely getting out of it, so much so, she did not know what sunshine was for several years. At that time there happened to be in that room some books on ancient lore such as *Mahabaratam, Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad Gita* which she read over and over again. Her mind thereby got attuned towards God.

After some years she came out of her solitude and began moving about in the midst of the families of her brothers and sister with the intention of serving them by way of *Nishkama Karma*. Soon she got dissatisfied with it and began going about on pilgrimage to various places in the country in search of a Sadguru. That is how she ultimately landed at Sri Ramanasramam.

Life in an Ashram is never smooth sailing; it is beset with hardships, innumerable obstacles and several pitfalls, and Nagamma has had her due share of them. This book gives a detailed description of how Bhagavan, with his advice and guidance, helped her to get over all those difficulties.

This book gives such great details of the life of a *Sadhak* in an Ashram, it can be confidently expected that one who goes through it carefully and does *Sadhana* in the manner indicated therein will be greatly benefited thereby.

Akhandam Sitarama Sastri

Early Years

I was hardly eleven years when I was married. Like ladies mentioned in the *puranas*, I thought I could attain salvation by devotedly serving my husband but, only a year later, he passed away suddenly after an attack of smallpox, conferring on me a lifelong widowhood. I was too young at the time to realise the full implications of the calamity. Even so, I was heartbroken and, brooding over my misfortune, confined myself all alone to one of the rooms in our big house. I had no taste for food and rarely went out of the house. So I became very pale and suffered from stomach disorders. I was lying on the floor all the time on a torn mat, my hand for a pillow, and resembled a lizard clinging to the wall. Whenever anyone came to see me, I wept bitterly. Several months passed thus.

I did not like to remain any more in the family atmosphere I had been long accustomed to. The desire to know from some great soul the path of liberation grew intensively in me. Although I had heard of several eminent men in the spiritual field, no one appeared to have the attributes of the *siddhapurusha*

I had seen in my dream and so I could not accept any one of them as my Guru. Whenever possible, I used to go to Kanaka Durga temple in Vijayawada and pray to Her as the presiding deity of the place to bestow on me the favour of a *sadguru*. I dedicated to Her my *Manasa Satakam*. In that book there are quite a number of verses about the search for a *sadguru*.

The First Darshan

Though Bhagavan had not spoken to me at all, I was deeply impressed by him. I found in him a resemblance to the *mahapurusha* who once came into my dream and also saw all the attributes of a *jivanmukta* as described in *Vasishtam* and other *vedantic* books. He seemed unattached to anything, like water on a lotus leaf, sparkling in the sun. As I observed Bhagavan from day to day, I felt convinced that he was the person who could dispel my ignorance and that I should surrender myself into his care. However, I could not summon enough courage to say so in as many words.

Arpana (Offering)

There was absolute quiet in the hall. I entered trembling all over, placed the bundle at the feet of Bhagavan, folded my hands and with shaky voice said, "Here are the letters. I have been asked to hand them over to the Ashram. I have bundled them and brought them here. It is not merely a bundle of letters. It is my heart's treasure. Bhagavan may do whatever he likes with them. I never did the work for fame or wealth". As I said that, tears rolled down my cheeks in abundance. Bhagavan looked at me with sympathy and received the bundle with both his hands. He turned it over and giving it to Rajagopala Iyer remarked, "Here it is. She has brought all the letters duly bundled. Take them and give them to the office." Meantime, I wiped my tears and sat in the front row reserved for the ladies. My sister-in-law sat by my side. My tears did not stop.

Resumption of Writing Letters

One day, I felt tired of writing and wished some one would help me in the work. Feeling that way, I went to Bhagavan and sat before him. He proceeded to casually tell the story of the sparrow and Garuda and incidentally remarked:

"People who do good work and have a mind to choose self-enquiry never give up their work, although they feel it to be a burden. As in the case of the sparrow in the story, help comes from somewhere, just as Garuda came to the help of the bird. By God's grace help comes of its own accord." This very timely message came to me most unexpectedly and cheered me up considerably.

Every now and then, people from the Ashram office used to enquire, if I was still writing letters and I used to say no. I was, however, feeling guilty because it was not true. I used to wonder why I should continuously have to speak lies and why I should write letters in that adverse atmosphere; also why I should not give up the work altogether. With these doubts and fears worrying me, I went up to Bhagavan one day only to find him relating incidents of his childhood days. "I too told a lie to my aunt on the day I left Madurai", said Bhagavan. He added, "It is not we that speak the lie. Some force makes us say so. Even Sankara took to *sanyasa* only by telling a lie." In this way Bhagavan cleared all my doubts concerning the letters.

Healing of Another Tumour

Bhagavan had a cousin called Ramaswami. His wife, Ammalamma, came for the Kumbhabhishekam and stayed on for a while. One morning that venerable old lady came to Bhagavan and, after prostrating, told him that a relative was sick and that she had to go. Noticing that she had a tumour as big as a lime fruit on the upper portion of her neck Bhagavan asked her what it was. She said she did not know but that it was slowly increasing in size. She said there was no pain unless it was pressed. "Oh! Yes, Yes," said Ramana. "See. How it is growing. The one on my arm was of the same nature. If the plasters and medicine received from Nellore are applied, that tumour may heal up." Bhagavan looked at one of the devotees sitting near him, asking him to fetch the required items. "It seems it is a good medicine," explained the Master. "Let her at least be cured; it is no use for me as I have been operated upon."

When the devotee brought the tin containing the medicine, Bhagavan took it and looking at me said, "Here is the medicine. Give it to her. Let her at least be cured." As soon as he said this the woman's son, Viswanatha Brahmachari, came in. Bhagavan called him and said, "Look! Give this to your mother. I have been operated upon, you see. So why use this medicine for me? Let her get the benefit of it instead." The lady, took the medicine as *prasadam* (a holy gift). It seems she applied the plaster with some green leaves, and cotton lint dipped in milk and finally the tumour disappeared. When I heard Bhagavan saying, "Let her at least be cured," I felt very disheartened. Did it mean he would not get cured? If the doctors had said that they had removed the tumour completely and that it would not recur, why were we hearing such ominous words from Bhagavan? My head began to reel with all sorts of misgivings.

Where will Bhagavan Go?

On 23rd July, after Bhagavan had read a letter from a Madurai devotee, he said to me, "Look! This devotee asks why there should be so many sorts of treatment for Bhagavan? Would it not be better if one of the devotees took over Bhagavan's ailment?

Overwhelmed with grief, I replied, "Yes. That is correct. Instead of you yourself suffering this pain, why don't you distribute it to all of us? Whenever food is brought to Bhagavan, you distribute it. So why not distribute the illness likewise. We do not have the ability to take it upon ourselves and so Bhagavan himself will have to pass it on to us. I am asking you to give it to me. Why not give it?"

As I said this, I burst into tears and could not say any more. Bhagavan merely looked at me with compassion, nodding his head and remained quiet. All the devotees in the hall shed tears. Bhagavan always conducts himself according to the situation. If anyone slightly familiar with Bhagavan would say in a powerful mood, "Please somehow cure yourself of this ailment," Bhagavan would merely answer, "What can I do? What have I to do? What is there for me to do?"

Sahanam (Patience)

A similar thing happened three years previously. A great devotee had discussed the matter of Bhagavan's muscular pains with one of his attendants, Rajagopala Iyer. Afraid that the Master may not agree to costly medicines for relief, they purchased costly ingredients instead and prepared an

ointment. As it was being done without his being told, Bhagavan remained indifferent. After the ointment was ready for application it was used for a day or two and then the devotee went away giving suitable instructions to the attendants. Four or five days later the skin became reddish and fissures developed. Bhagavan never complained about the pain or the fissures on the skin. When the attendants pointed out the cracks in the skin Bhagavan merely said, "That means that whatever is inside is coming out. Let it come out."

About the same time another devotee brought an electric heater. As it was the cold season, the heater was switched on for a day or two. The ointment and the blower further increased the fissures on the legs. All the devotees noticed it. Some began to say that it was due either to the ointment or the heater and that they both should be stopped immediately. Bhagavan remarked, "You see the ointment was prepared with costly ingredients with the idea that the muscular pains would subside quickly. This is the result. It is all right. They felt the usual charcoal stove was no good and so brought a costly and fashionable electric heater. Did they do all these things after asking me? They were afraid I might say 'No' and so they planned it this way. It was all with the best of intentions — mainly to do to decline to use them, would they not think that they took a lot of trouble to serve Bhagavan and I have sighted them? Why should I make them feel slighted?" The devotee said, "Is it so necessary to consider these feelings when your whole body is covered with blisters?"

Bhagavan: "What of that? They have spent a lot of money. Will not all of that go waste?"

Devotee: "Why waste it? Someone else will use the articles."

Bhagavan: "What? A thing that does not suit me — why should it be used for others and make them suffer?"

Devotee: "Then we will keep the ointment for use some time later."

The devotee insisted on stopping the use of the ointment and then prayed Bhagavan to suggest some other method of treatment. He suggested that *myrobolams* should be powdered and soaked in oil for some time before being brought to him for application. When that was done all the blisters disappeared in no time.

This time I felt Bhagavan also might be requested to suggest something to cure his condition. If at any time, such a suggestion is made he would say, "They are reputable doctors. They are doing something. Let them do it."

Brahma Nirvana

"Oh, Lord! Won't you for once turn your compassionate look on me?" I prayed thus to Bhagavan and stood there looking intently on him. His eyes slowly began to open. Noticing it, the people around him followed the direction of his eyes which turned towards the place arranged for *darshan*. From these eyes a cool look came to me. That look seemed to say, "Here, see me. How long do you want me to be in this damaged body? Won't you give up your fancy for this body?"

Immediately a great change came over my mind. I said to myself "All these days I have been praying

to you not to go away leaving us desolate, but now I pray no more to that effect. We cannot bear to see the present condition of your body anymore. You need not bear this burden for our sake."

Ekaaki Yathachittathma (Living in Seclusion All Alone and Engaging the Mind in Meditation)

At Ramana Sadhana, I live alone with Bhagavan, as it were. Although there are no facilities for boarding and lodging as at the Ashram, some devotees do stay here for a day or two but that is rare. This solitary life has been my lot ever since 1941, when first I went to Arunachala. At that time, Bhagavan was there in his body; now he is in the photo, and that is all the company I have ever had all these years. People ask me how I manage to live alone and I invariably tell them that Bhagavan is there to protect me. The Master has graciously bestowed on me the fearlessness and courage which enable me to live the life of a *sadhak* as described in the *Gita*, in the following verse:

The Yogi who has subdued his mind and body and who is free from desire and bereft of possessions, living in seclusion all by himself alone, constantly engages his mind in meditation.

Chapter VI : 10

I trust in Bhagavan that I will ultimately be united with Him in the depths of peace.

My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana

By
A. Devaraja Mudaliar

Chapter II

Bhagavan, however, from what little I know of him, was not one who believed in forcing the pace. On the contrary, he gave me the impression that he felt it was not proper and was not for our real good, that he should interfere and do violence to our nature or Prakriti by hurrying us at a faster pace than we are built for, even towards realisation. Compare the following lines of Rabindranath Tagore in Gitanjali:

"Time is endless in Thy hands, my Lord!

Days and nights pass and ages bloom and fade like flowers.

Thou knowest how to wait,

Thy centuries follow each other, perfecting a small wild flower

We have no time to lose and having no time

We must scramble for our chances. We are too poor to be late."

This seems an appropriate place for referring to another well known characteristic of Bhagavan. To those who have only a very superficial knowledge of him or his works, it might seem that he was a cold, relentlessly logical, unemotional *jnani*, far removed from the *bhakta* who melts into tears in contemplation of God's Grace and love. But to those who had any real experience of Bhagavan and his ways, and works, it was clear that he was as much a *bhakta* as a *jnani*. Often he has told us that only a *jnani* can be a true *bhakta*. The complete extinction of the ego is the end attained either in *jnana* or *bhakti*. Further dissertation on this head is not necessary here; I mean only to refer to the fact that on many occasions when touching songs were recited or read out before him, or when he himself was reading out to us poems or passages from the lives or works of famous saints, he would be moved to tears and would find it impossible to restrain them. He would be reading out and explaining some passage and when he came to a very moving part he would get so choked with emotion that he could not continue but would lay aside the book.

Chapter IV

One summer afternoon I was sitting opposite Bhagavan in the old hall, with a fan in my hand and said to him: "I can understand that the outstanding events in a man's life, such as his country, nationality, family, career or profession, marriage, death, etc., are all predetermined by his karma, but can it be that all the details of his life, down to the minutest, have already been determined? Now, for instance, I put the fan that is in my hand down on the floor here. Can it be that it was already decided that on such and such a day, at such and such an hour, I shall move the fan like this and put it down here?"

Bhagavan replied "Certainly". He continued: "Whatever this body is to do and whatever experience it is to pass through was already decided when it came into existence."

In Bhagavan's own case, as in that of his famous fore-runner Sankara, we can see how *Jnana* and

Bhakti were inextricably blended. Once Krishna Prem (a learned and devout Englishman who has become an ascetic and is now living in an asramam of his own near Almora in the Himalayas) visited Bhagavan, and when I had a chat with him subsequently at Madras he said: "Many people had told me Bhagavan was a pure *Jnani*. But I consider him a very great *Bhakta*. When I showed him my image of Lord Krishna, which I worship and carry about with me, tears came into his eyes as he handled it and gave it back to me. If this is not *Bhakti*, what else is it?"

When Sri Jagadisa Sastri, the Sanskrit Pandit in Bhagavan's court, was on his death bed, and wrote his final appeal in his poems declaring that he would not accept any plea by Bhagavan that *prarabdha* must follow its course, and that if only Bhagavan willed it His Grace would cancel *prarabdha* and save him. Bhagavan took such compassion on him that he was pulled out of the jaws of death and is now flourishing in Madras. Not only I but many other close devotees of Bhagavan fully believe that it was only Bhagavan's Grace that saved the Sastri from certain death.

Most of the time I lived with Bhagavan, I used to feel peaceful and absolutely free from care. That, as many can testify, was the outstanding effect of his presence. Nevertheless, it did occasionally happen that something disturbed the peace and happiness for a while. On one such occasion I asked Bhagavan: "Why do such interruptions come? Does it mean that we have ceased to have Bhagavan's Grace then?"

With what graciousness did Bhagavan reply: "You, crazy fellow! The trouble or want of peace comes only because of Grace."

On other occasions also Bhagavan has similarly told me: "You people are glad and grateful to God when things you regard as good come to you. That is right, but you should be equally grateful when things you regard as bad come to you. That is where you fail."

Here I must say that the only method, I have adopted to achieve liberation or Self-realisation is simply to throw myself on Bhagavan, to surrender to him as completely as lies in my power, and to leave everything else to him. And Bhagavan's teaching, the last I ever got from him before he attained *Mahasamadhi*, was just this: "Your business is simply to surrender and leave everything to me. If one really surrenders completely, there is no room for him to complain that the Guru has not done this or that."

Chapter V

Another foreign visitor, an elderly gentleman, set out to explore the hill behind the Asramam after lunch on day and lost his way. What with the heat and the exertion the old man was soon in a sorry plight and did not know what to do to get back to the Asramam or which way to go. At that juncture Bhagavan happened to pass by and showed him the way to the Asramam, and the man returned safely. Friends at the Asramam asked him where he had been all that long while and he replied: "I just went out for a stroll on the hill but got lost. The heat and exertion were a little too much for me and I was in a bad way. I don't know what I would have done but for the fact that Bhagavan happened to come that way and directed me to the Asramam."

The asramites were astonished because they knew that Bhagavan had never left the hall.

There is of course the well known instance of Bhagavan having appeared before Kavya Kanta

Ganapathi Sastrigal at Tiruvottiyur, bodily, when Sastrigal was wide awake. This is mentioned in Bhagavan's biography. Bhagavan was bodily present both at the Asramam and at Tiruvottiyur at the same time. I and others have received confirmation of this incident from Bhagavan's own lips.

Chapter VII

All *Jnani's* like our Bhagavan regard the body only as a burden to be discarded.

Long before this conversation with Mr. Sastriar, Bhagavan had discussed this question with us. He said: "Suppose you go to a firewood depot, buy a faggot of firewood and engage a coolie there to carry it to your house. As you walk along with him, he will be anxiously looking forward to his destination so that he can throw off his burden and be happy and relieved. In the same way the *Jnani* is anxious to throw off his body". I believe he quoted a Tamil stanza which contains the above statement. However, after explaining this he added: "The above exposition is all right as far as it goes. But strictly speaking even this is not quite accurate. The true *jnani* is not even anxious to shed his body, he is indifferent alike to the existence or non-existence of the body, being almost unaware of it".

From the night of April 13th his state was seen to be critical, nevertheless he insisted on the 14th that the crowd of devotees should not be denied their *darshan* of him. So we all filed past the open doorway of the little room where he lay and had *darshan* in the morning of the 14th and again at about 6-30 in the evening. He attained *Mahasamadhi* at 8-47 p.m. on April 14, 1950 and at the same moment a meteor-like flash, leaving a trail some yards long, appeared in the sky to the south-west and moved north eastwards to Arunachala Hill where it disappeared behind the peak. The light that was Bhagavan thus merged in the Pillar of Light that was and is Arunachala, the Sacred Hill.

My Reminiscences

By
N. Balarama Reddy

Compiler's Note

Soon after Sri Ramana Maharshi's Mahasamadhi in 1950, a committee was formed to collect written reminiscences from the Master's devotees. Committee members approached those devotees who were intimate with Bhagavan, had firsthand experience of his ways, and understood his teachings. Arthur Osborne and S. S. Cohen, who were members of the committee, met with N. Balarama Reddy and wasted no time in requesting him to write his reminiscences. Balarama Reddy declined. He told them he mostly sat silently meditating in Bhagavan's presence and never took notes of what he heard or saw.

While visiting Sri Ramanasramam in 1993, my name was added to the list of devotees who entreated him to write. After all, he was then in his eighty-fifth year and how much longer could he delay? I reasoned with him. Where would be the Christ of the Christians if not for Mathew, Mark, Luke and John? I pleaded. It was only through his eyes that we, the second generation of devotees, could see and know about the personality that captivated his heart; the same personality that would undoubtedly captivate the hearts of countless future generations. 'After you go, this wealth within you will be lost. You must write now, while you are still able,' I beseeched him.

Balarama Reddy is a kind man, intelligent and wise. If he didn't exactly agree with my argument, he sympathised with my sincerity, and in his goodness agreed - not to write, but to relate to me whatever incidents and experiences with the Maharshi he could remember. These stories went on to include meetings with Ananda Mayi Ma, Swami Ramdas and other personalities. He fixed a time, between 6:30 and 7:30 in the evening, to meet with me. So I began meeting with him in his room every day for the purpose of hearing his reminiscences. After we met I would put down a few brief notes on the topics of our conversations, and in the morning, following breakfast, I would sit in my room and use these notes to recall all I had heard the previous evening.

I found this daily exercise to be an exhilarating experience. I would be so caught up in the flow of incidents relating to Bhagavan, that I felt as if they were taking place before my own eyes. Balarama Reddy has the power to draw out from his memory, like a spider drawing out his web, the dynamic personality of the Maharshi's presence. He easily caught me in this web, and I sincerely hope this little book catches many others.

Dennis J. Hartel

Second Visit to Sri Ramanasramam

When I visited Sri Ramanasramam for the second time in March 1935, I decided to make it a three-day visit. At the end of this three-day visit, I began to feel that perhaps my place was here with the Maharshi. The idea of having Bhagavan as my Guru and Ramanasramam as my home began revolving in my mind.

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Taking leave of the Maharshi, I approached him while he was sitting on his couch, which was then positioned outside on the verandah. His feet were softly resting on the ground. He had just returned from an afternoon stroll, following the mid-day meal. I fell to my knees and bowed before his holy feet. I was aware of the ashram rule that prohibited devotees from touching Bhagavan's body, so I kept a slight distance. But, as I lowered my head near his feet, in the twinkling of an eye, Bhagavan's feet ever so gently rose from the ground and the big toe of each foot very lightly touched the closed eyelids of each eye. It all happened in an instant. I was thrilled.

Settling at Sri Ramanasramam

On January 5, 1937, I arrived at Sri Ramanasramam for good. This happened to be the day after the Maharshi's fifty-seventh birthday. On another day, not too long after settling near Sri Ramanasramam, I approached Bhagavan when no one was in the hall and showed him that last letter I had received from Sri Aurobindo. He asked me to read it out. I began reading it and when I came to the sentence, 'Since you are determined to follow a path in which you can achieve only partial realisation...' Bhagavan stopped me and said, 'Partial realisation? If it is partial, it is not realisation, and it it is realisation, it is not partial.'

In the first year of my settling in Tiruvannamalai, I remember one afternoon when I was sitting in the hall and Bhagavan was explaining a particular spiritual point to me. During the discussion he asked me to go to one of the two *almirahs* that were up against the west wall and bring him a certain book. I searched for the book but was unable to find it. I returned to Bhagavan, informed him of my failure to locate the book, and again sat down against the south wall facing him.

Presently, I saw Bhagavan slowly and majestically walk over to the *almirah*, open it, and immediately pull out the book he had asked me to find. He closed the *almirah* and, to my surprise, instead of walking back to the couch, he came and sat on the floor right next to me, on my left. He opened the book to the page he wanted me to read and, holding it in his right hand, held the book before my face and asked me to read the particular passage.

Bhagavan's attendants had told me that his body was like a furnace. Only then, when he sat so close to me, did I understand what they meant. I felt spiritual power emanating from his body like an electric dynamo. I was thrilled to the core of my being.

Krishnaprem Visits the Ashram

During this visit, Krishnaprem handed over his small Gopala Krishna idol to Bhagavan. Bhagavan tenderly turned it this way and that, looked at it intently and then returned it to him. Krishnaprem's vision and inner experiences while sitting before Bhagavan in the Old Hall has already been recorded in other places.

From Sri Ramanasramam he travelled to the Aurobindo Ashram. After staying there a few days we planned that he and I would rendezvous at Villupuram railway station, from where we would travel south, visiting famous temples and holy places. My train from Tiruvannamalai was scheduled to

leave at 1 P.M. So, immediately after lunch I approached Bhagavan to take his leave. He had just finished his meal and was massaging his rheumatic knees; he had to do this before walking in his old age. I prostrated before him and informed him of my departure. He already knew all the details. He also knew I was planning on visiting Kanyakumari.

He said to me, 'These people (meaning the management) have written to an advocate-devotee of Nagerkoil to send us the three different-coloured sands that are available at Kanyakumari. These are needed for the *Kumbhabhishekam* of the Matrubhuteswara Temple. So far, he has not sent them.' Though Bhagavan did not say specifically that I should bring the sand, I naturally understood what was in his mind. In fact, he often employed this manner of speaking, asking us indirectly, when he wanted something done. Before leaving he also asked me to write and send him details of the pilgrimage.

When I arrived in Kanyakumari I discovered that the government had enforced a law prohibiting the removal of any sand from the beach. Uranium, used for making atomic bombs, had been found there. Nevertheless, I thought I should take my chances and stealthily proceeded to gather the three different sands. I filled three bags and concealed them in my bedroll. At the railway station I hired a man to carry my luggage. I saw the ticket collector and two policemen standing at the gate. The ticket collector was checking tickets and the policemen were checking baggage for illegal sand. I asked my man to stop and we both stood there momentarily as I contemplated the situation. Pondering over my next move, I mentally prayed to Bhagavan, 'You wanted me to bring this sand. Now look at this - police! What am I to do? As soon as I prayed thus, the policemen, for some unknown reason, turned and walked away from the gate. I immediately told my man, 'Let's go.' We passed through the gate and boarded the train.

When I returned to the ashram and brought the bags of sands to Bhagavan, he called everyone around to come and look. Later the sand expected from the advocate arrived by post, but the bags had broken en-route and the three varieties of sands got mixed, making them useless. When Bhagavan heard that, he remarked, 'If Balarama Reddy had not brought the sands, how could we have obtained a fresh consignment in time for the consecration ceremony?"

In Bhagavan's Hall

Once the private secretary to the Governor of Pondicherry arrived at the ashram with a few of his associates. He came into the hall with a large sheet of paper filled with a long list of questions written in an elaborate, complex style of French. He handed the paper over to Bhagavan, walked to the window opposite Bhagavan's couch and sat on the window sill. Bhagavan looked at the questions and, noticing they were in French, asked me to translate them. I found the French difficult to translate. I was struggling with it, word by word, while translating it to Bhagavan.

Bhagavan, realising my difficulty, said, 'That's not necessary. Just tell me the gist of it. I scanned the list and told Bhagavan that he really didn't want oral answers but rather in the form of an experience.

Bhagavan paused for a moment. He then slowly turned his face in the direction of the questioner and rested his eyes on him. After about thirty seconds, I noticed the man's body began to tremble. Soon he was shaking all over. Then he blurted out, 'Oh no, Bhagavan, not now! Please Bhagavan, not now!'

The Last Days

A government minister from Madras, Sitarama Reddy, arrived at the ashram. This was his first visit and, since he was known to me, I was asked by the management to personally take him to visit Bhagavan in the Nirvana Room.

When we walked into Bhagavan's presence I noticed a peculiar radiance, or a strange kind of soft splendour, pervading the room. I thought I was seeing this because of my devotion to Bhagavan. Rationalizing it in this manner, I even tried to dismiss it.

As soon as we came out of the room the minister turned to me and asked, 'What was that brilliance, or radiance, pervading the Maharshi's room?' When he said this, without any probing from me, I thought there must be something to it. Then, all of a sudden, I remembered Ganapati Muni's second verse from his Chatvarimsat:

Who is the master and guide of the whole group of learned scholars beginning with Ganapati, Who is the repository of all the highest virtues, Whose beatific effulgence is hidden by the sheath of the gross body, like the blazing sun hidden behind the clouds.

Dr. Lt. Col. P. V. Karmachandani, the district medical officer, was present. Seeing Bhagavan's critical condition on April 14, he went to Vellore to bring his wife. The Doctor told me: 'I had a great desire to offer orange juice to Bhagavan. As the fruit was not available here, we purchased a few at Vellore, which my wife, with great devotion, made into juice. This we took with us to the ashram. Sri Bhagavan was by then declining all liquids, as movement to and from the bathroom was so troublesome to him. Twice he declined the offer, but asked for water instead. I was feeling sorry for my wife's unfulfilled longing. This time, with all the earnestness in my soul, I conveyed a mute prayer to the Maharshi to spare my wife from heart-breaking disappointment. Bhagavan at once said, "Give me orange juice." And when I offered it, he drank it.' It was nothing but total compassion on Bhagavan's part to have asked for the orange juice, simply to fulfil the desire of a devotee.

On the final evening, thousands were cramped into the ashram grounds around Bhagavan's room. A gloomy mood enveloped the area, as Bhagavan's end was anticipated at any moment. The fan being waved over Bhagavan's body by the attendant was visible through the door, and all eyes were fixed on it. knowing that when it ceased moving, Bhagavan's heart would have ceased beating.

Mrs. Taleyarkhan, an influential devotee with the administration in those days, obtained permission to go into the Nirvana Room and have her last *darshan* at 7 p.m. At this sad juncture, she approached me and asked me to join her. I quietly stood there thinking, and then replied, 'No, You please go ahead. I cannot go.' During that year I had seen Bhagavan's body suffer enough. There was no need for me to see more.

Shortly there after, the fan stopped, the famed meteor slowly floated across the heavens, and it was all over. The light that illumined the earth as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi had now merged with the Eternal Light, the source of all creation.

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RAMANA ARUNACHALA

By Arthur Osborne

Foreword

Until the evening of *Karthikai* when, each year, a beacon is lit on the summit of Arunachala, or it may have been *Deepavali*, I am not quite sure, there were huge crowds for the festival and we were sitting in the courtyard outside the hall. Bhagavan was reclining on his couch and I was sitting in the front row before it. He sat up, facing me, and his narrowed eyes pierced into me penetrating, intimate, with an intensity I cannot describe. It was as though they said: "You have been told; why have you not realized?" And then quietness, a depth of peace, an indescribable lightness and happiness.

During these years I had felt no need to write about Bhagavan. After his body's death and his reassurance: "I am not going away; I am here; where could I go?", there was a dream in which he called me up to him and, as I knelt before his couch, placed his hands on my head in blessing. At this time an impulse came to write about Bhagavan and especially to explain the accessibility of the path of Self-enquiry which he taught. Most of the chapters in this books were written first as articles in various papers during the months following the *Mahasamadhi* and they have now been collected together and edited to form a book.

Chapter One: Ramana Arunachala

He was One with the Being that contains and transcends them. When he continued to wear the human form after transcending the human and all other states, he accepted its limitations - to feel heat and cold, to suffer pain and sickness, to be bound by ignorance of events. Had he worn a human body but set himself free from its conditions of pain and sickness and ignorance of events, people would have said: "It is easy for him to tell us to abide in the heart, unperturbed by events, because he has no pain or uncertainty and we have." But he accepted pain and uncertainty as features of the human form and showed that they cannot touch the equanimity of the *Jnani*, who remains fixed immovably in the Real. This gave force to his teaching, since he was but exhorting his devotees to do as he did.

However, the teaching of Sri Ramana is, by its nature, not intended to cause such an upheaval as that of Buddha or Christ or even Shankara, for he did not come to preach a new religion or to restore an existing one. His work was to open a new spiritual path suited to the conditions of the modern world and accessible to all who turned to him, from whatever religion or community they might be. That is to say that it is an appeal not to whole communities but to those individual among them who can see their own good and pursue it.

Chapter Two: The Man who was Ramana

Bhagavan Sri Ramana was meticulously exact, closely observant, practical and humorous. His daily life was conducted with a punctiliousness that Indians today would have to call pure Western. In

everything he was precise and orderly. The Ashram hall was swept out several times daily. The books were always in their places. The clothes covering the couch were scrupulously clean and beautifully folded. The loin-cloth, which was all he wore, was gleaming white. The two clocks in the hall were adjusted daily to radio time. The calendar was never allowed to fall behind the date. The routine of life flowed to a regular pattern.

Although he was an absolute King and all craved to obey him, Bhagavan's life was, notwithstanding, a lesson in submission. Owing to his refusal to express any wish or desire, the Ashram authorities built up their own structure of regulations, and Bhagavan obeyed them without demur; so that if any devotee found them irksome he had before his eyes the example of Bhagavan's own submission. If ever Bhagavan resisted it was likely to be in the interests of the devotees, and even so it was usually in silence and very often in a manner dictated by his shrewd sense of humour. An attendant once rebuked a European woman for sitting with her legs stretched out. Bhagavan at once sat up cross-legged and continued so despite the pain caused by the rheumatism in his knees. When the devotees protested, he replied that the attendant's orders were for every one, and it was only when the lesson had been driven home that he consented to relax.

But it was not only submission to regulations; it was submission to all the conditions of life and to pain and sickness which taught us silently that pain cannot disturb the equanimity of one who abides in the Self. Throughout the long and painful sickness that finally killed his body he submitted loyally, one after another, to the doctors who were put in charge, never complaining, never asking for a change of treatment. If ever there was any inclination to try a different treatment it was only so that those who recommended it should not be disappointed: and even then it was made dependent on the consent of the Ashram authorities. If there is a tendency today to regard submission as spiritless it is only because egoism is regarded as natural.

We shall not again see the Divine Grace in human form or the love shining in his eyes, but in our hearts he is with us and will not leave us. His Grace continues to be poured out, not only on those who knew the miracle of his bodily form, but on all who turn to him in their hearts, now as before.

I have not given a clear picture of the man who was Ramana, but how can one portray the universal? What impressed one was his complete unselfconsciousness like that of a little child, his Divinity and intense humanity. The Divinity was recognized in the act of prostration and in addressing him in the third person as 'Bhagavan'. To have said 'you' would have been a jarring assertion of otherness. In speaking of himself Bhagavan spoke very simply and said 'I' or 'this'. Only occasionally, when the meaning clearly indicated it, did he used the third person: "If you remember Bhagavan, Bhagavan will remember you." "Even if you let go of Bhagavan, Bhagavan will never let go of you."

Chapter Three: The Direct Path

The task performed by Bhagavan Sri Ramana was to reopen the direct path of Self-enquiry which had become too arduous for our spiritually dark age. This path, with its theoretical basis of *Advaita*, stands, so to speak, at the source from which the various religions diverge and can therefore be

approached from any side. Whether there are many or few who take it is not the question, only that it has been made open.

In itself, but for the Grace of Bhagavan, it would be the most inaccessible to modern man on account of its very simplicity and directness; and yet it is the most accessible, and in many cases the only accessible path, from the contingent point of view, since, because of its very directness, it requires no ritual or forms of worship, no priesthood or congregation, no outer signs or special observances, but can be practised in the workshop or kitchen or city office as well as in the monastery or hermitage.

In the same impersonal way a man can attend to all the affairs of life, knowing that he, the real Self, is unaffected by them; and every attack of greed, anger or desire can be dispelled by *vichara*. It must be dispelled, because it is no use repeating that one is the Self and acting as though one were the ego. Real, even partial, awareness of the Self weakens egotism: egotism, whether expressed as vanity, greed or desire, is a proof that recognition of the Self is merely mental.

This means that in adapting an ancient path to modern conditions Bhagavan has in effect created a new path. The ancient path of Self-enquiry was pure *Jnana-marga* to be followed by the recluse in silence and solitude, withdrawn from the outer world. Bhagavan has made it a path to be followed invisible in the world in the conditions of modern life.

Whosoever submits to him will be borne up and never forsaken. "God and Guru are not really different, they are identical. He who has earned the Grace of the Guru will undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the tiger's jaws will never be allowed to escape. But the disciple, for his part should unswervingly follow the path shown by the Master."

Chapter Four: Arunachala Ramana

The spiritual power of Arunachala has become active again as it was long ago. Dakshinamurthi has moved down to the foot of the hill. He said, "I am not going away; I am here." He is here at Tiruvannamalai as before and at the same time he is spaceless Arunachala-Ramana, here in the heart of every devotee who turns to him, guiding them as before.

Bodily presence at Arunachala, at the shrine at the foot of the hill, is not necessary. The silent initiation, as before, can strike where it will. But for those who wear a body bodily presence remains a great aid.

If it were not so, Siva would not have needed to manifest as Arunachala or as Sri Ramana. The Grace of Bhagavan radiates from Arunachala and from his shrine there no less than it did from his bodily form. People are often drawn there as they feel their doubts and questions melting away and their wishes dissolved in love. Often enough the Grace poured out upon them affects their circumstances in life also and the inner harmony is reflected outwardly, but to go there for that purpose is to reject the greater good for the lesser. It is in that sense that Arunachala is wish-fulfilling and that it is better not to ask.

There are , moreover, positive indications that the guidance still exists.

When asked once whether a *Jivanmukta* continues to perform any function after physical death, Bhagavan replied that in some cases it is so.

When his physical death was imminent and devotees complained that he was leaving them without guidance, he replied: "You attach too much importance to the body," indicating thereby that his discarding it would not put an end to their guidance.

In reply to a question by Dr. Masalavala, retired Medical Officer of Bhopal State, Bhagavan replied, as recorded by Devaraja Mudaliar in 'Day by Day with Bhagavan': "Guru is not the physical form, so the contact will continue even after the physical form of the Guru vanishes."

His devotees know that he is still the Guru. They have felt the continuance of a guidance not only as potent but as subtle and detailed as before. For those who seek to turn to him it is best to say as he did to those who questioned the heart centre of which he spoke - that it is not discussion that is needed but trial. Let them invoke his Grace and strive in the way he prescribed and they will find out for themselves whether the Grace and guidance of the Guru are forthcoming.
The silent meditation and the morning and evening chanting of the Vedas continue before the Samadhi of Bhagavan as they did in his body presence. Now as then, access is for all, whatever their caste or religion. The spiritual support that comes in sitting before the Samadhi is not only as strong but as sweet and subtle as it was before the bodily presence.

To all those who turn to Bhagavan in their hearts the response is even more immediate, the support more powerful. Not only that (for that is true wherever they may be) but the spiritual revitalisation that they used to derive from a visit to Tiruvannamalai still continues, even though the beloved face is hidden.

Reflections

On

Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

By
S. S. Cohen

Preface

“Now what you should do is to learn what the Self is, and then directly seek it. Do not digress in irrelevant matters, in bodies, *koshas*, involution and evolution, birth and death; in supersensuous sights and sounds, etc., for all these are glamorous irrelevancies which trap and seduce you away from the reality of yourself and retain you in the delusion of the senses from which you are now attempting to escape.

What is of importance is not what you perceive, think or do, but WHAT YOU ARE.” Sense-perceptions, conceptions, sensations, actions, are mere dreams, mere pictures in the consciousness that perceives them. They rise from it, like dreams from the dreamer, distract its attention for a while and disappear in it. They change incessantly, have a beginning and an end, but he, the thinker and knower, being pure intelligence, remains ever. The knower is thus indestructible. The light of knowledge comes only from him, the subject, never from the object, the body.

What we therefore call our Self is not the body, which is born, grows and dies, which is made of innumerable non-homogeneous parts which do not think, do not seek, do not perceive and do not understand. We are the intelligent indivisible unit ‘I’ - life itself, - which pervades and uses the body, which sees but cannot be seen, hears but cannot be heard, smells but cannot be smelt, knows but cannot be known; for it is always a subject, never an object. And because we cannot see, hear or smell our ‘I’, we mistake it for the body which can be seen, heard and smelt. Thus the self-instinct, the ‘I’-sense, getting mixed up with the sense-percepts, from which none can save it but the Supreme Guide, the divine Guru.

Thus the knower, or dreamer, is alone real; the known is sheer dream. This sums up the teachings of the *Srutis*, and conforms to the experience of Sri Ramana Bhagavan.

To follow up the Quest till the Self is realised, is the path of *Jnana*, of Supreme Knowledge, of Liberation and Bliss everlasting - a path which has been viewed by the Master from every side and discussed in every detail. He has said everything that needs be said and revealed everything that needs be revealed. And whatever he has not said and revealed is scarcely worth knowing.

S. S. Cohen

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Chapter 1

Happiness and Misery

9. "Soul, mind and ego are mere words. These are not real entities. Consciousness is the only truth. Its nature is Bliss. Bliss alone is - enjoyer and enjoyment both merge in it. Pleasure consists in turning and keeping the mind within; pain in sending it outward. There is only pleasure. Absence of pleasure is called pain. One's nature is pleasure - bliss."

Note: Consciousness, Self, Being are one and the same reality. As we have already seen, the Self is blissful; we, in our nature, are bliss, but when we "rush out", to use the metaphor of the last note, when we extrovert and take the body for ourselves, giving it a special name, we become other than ourselves - the body and its name; - then we are not bliss. We take upon ourselves the suffering which the body of Mr. So-and-so is heir to. In other words we imagine ourselves the not-Self and likewise imagine in ourselves the suffering and pain of the not-Self. Extroversion is the cause of this false imagination. Instead of looking inwardly at the pure and blissful seer of the world, we look outwardly at the misery - and - disease - laden world and at the perishable body of the seer, which we mistake for the seer himself.

"Soul, mind, ego are mere words: consciousness is the only truth." This is a timely reminder that we should not lose ourselves in sounds that convey no sense at all. Bhagavan is supremely practical. Nobody knows what soul or ego is, although we repeat the words mechanically, but everybody knows what awareness is, what consciousness and unconsciousness mean, for we daily see before our eyes people in an unconscious state - in sleep, swoon, or under anaesthesia. Therefore the Master uses the word consciousness for the Self and for its synonyms - soul, spirit, mind, knowledge, intelligence, and even ego, which is a misnomer for the Self.

Chapter 7

God

4. "How is all-immanent God said to reside in the Ether of the Heart?"

Bhagavan: "Do we not reside in one place? Do you not say that you are in your body? Similarly God is said to reside in the Heart-lotus. The Heart-lotus is not a place. Some place is mentioned as the place of God, because we think we are in the body. This kind of teaching is meant for those who can appreciate only relative knowledge. Being immanent everywhere, there is no particular place for God. The instruction means 'look within'."

Note: That the Almighty God, who is infinite and boundless, can squeeze Himself in such a small and uncomfortable hole as the human heart, poses a tremendous problem to the sense-bound person. Bhagavan explains that the heart-lotus is not a physical place, but an apt simile made for the sake of those who "appreciate only relative knowledge," that is, sensuous experience. But the designation of Heart for God is not without foundation: the experience of absolute Being is felt in *samadhi* as pure

consciousness in one's inmost being, rather, to be precise, in the heart of one's being, because it is blissful as well as being. We are all agreed that joy or any emotion is only felt in the heart - not the muscular heart, but somewhere in our being, which we locate in the chest, though not in the flesh and ribs of the chest. It is in this heart, this subtle emotional centre, that the bliss of the pure consciousness or God is felt in *samadhi*. This is the meaning of the saying that God is bliss and resides in the ether of the heart. If the whole universe resides in this consciousness, it follows that consciousness pervades the universe. God is thus immanent and resides in the Heart as well. And if you wish to verify it, Bhagavan exhorts you to "look within."

Chapter 9

The Self or Reality

15. "There is no being who is not conscious and therefore who is not Siva. Not only he is Siva but also all else. Yet he thinks in sheer ignorance that he sees the universe in diverse forms. But if he sees the Self he will not be aware of his separateness from the universe. Siva is then seen as the universe. But (unfortunately) the seer does not see the background. Think of the man who sees only the cloth and not the cotton of which it is made; or the pictures and not the screen; or the letters which he reads and not the paper on which they are written. Siva is both the Being assuming the forms in the universe as well as the consciousness that sees them. That is to say Siva is the background underlying both the subject and the object - Siva is repose and Siva is action. Whatever it is said to be, it is only Consciousness, whether in repose or in action."

Note: It is now evident that Siva is not other than the seer. The last part of this text which makes the absolute consciousness to be "in repose" as well as "in action" is a good answer to the doctrinaire theory that Chaitanya does not include the active senses. If it does not include them, whence then do they arise and enact a world? They answer that the senses do not exist at all - all is Maya, which implies that Maya is the creator of the senses, which is absurd. The senses are, like memory, space-sense, time-sense, etc., undeniable, for they are responsible for the appearance of an external world, whereas Maya is the name given to this appearance, this illusion. Maya is thus not the parent but the offspring of the senses. Therefore, the senses are the activity of Chaitanya, the Pure Consciousness, but, to repeat, an APPARENT activity, which displays a world that does not exist, like a dream. It is an activity which is within the consciousness, though it appears to be without it, an activity which does not affect the consciousness itself. And, being an appearance within the consciousness, it is the consciousness itself, that is, of the same nature as its substratum; for it cannot be of an alien nature, since there exists nothing but pure consciousness. Thus the world is Siva Himself. He is BEING as well as DOING - Repose as well as Action. And this will not be realised as such until Siva is first realised as BEING, because BEING is His very nature, whereas DOING is only an appearance in Him.

Unless action is understood to be a mere appearance in Being, the true nature of the object will ever remain a puzzle to the student of metaphysics. This is of fundamental importance for the proper comprehension of the relation of the perceptions to their seer, of the changeless Self to the ever-changing phenomena, of the screen, to use Bhagavan's analogy, to the pictures which move on it.

Chapter 13

Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi

9. "The *Srutis* speak of the Self as being of the size of the thumb, the tip of the hair, a spark, subtler than the subtle, etc., etc. They have no foundation in fact. It is only Being. It is simply Being. People desire to see it as a blazing light, etc. How can it be? It is neither light nor darkness. It is only as it is, It cannot be defined. The best definition for it is 'I am that I am'."

Note: That settles it: we are not to take literally all the descriptions of the Self found here and there. If we do, then we will be giving form to the formless, name to the nameless, and attributes to the attributeless. All objective descriptions and comparisons of the Self are meaningless, and must stop at a point not too far away. Bhagavan does not wish to slight the *Srutis*, because he himself very often quotes them. What he declares is only the lack of uniformity and cohesion which almost always confounds and confuses the casual student and biased theologian who finds in them a vast field for adverse propaganda. The beginner feels himself honestly lost in what appears to be a maze of inconsistencies and exaggerations, as witness these descriptions of the Self. The *Jnani* knows how to tackle the Upanishads. The veteran seeker likewise skims much of their cream, according to his intuitive maturity. The others take them literally and allow their imagination to run riot, or hold to their letter tenaciously but allow the spirit to slip through their fingers.

Bhagavan is keen that we have a notion of the Self which is divested of all analogies and sensory descriptions. The Self is pure Being. To be, by its very definition, means to exist, which negates non-existence. Being therefore means eternal existence, which can be said of only an indestructible substance. But all objective things are destructible, being insentient. Therefore eternal existence can be predicted on only the be-ing which is pure sentience. This we call the Infinite Self or Supreme Consciousness which transcends all objectivity. What description or analogy can therefore fit it? Bhagavan finds a single definition which can do so, namely 'I am that I am', that is, the "undefinable Being".

Chapter 14

The Jnani or Jivan Mukta

6. "Is there no 'I-am-the-body' idea for the *Jnani*? If, for instance, Sri Bhagavan is bitten by an insect, is there no sensation?

Bhagavan: "There is the sensation and there is also the 'I-am-the-body' idea. The latter is common to both the *Jnani* and the *ajnani* with this difference, that the *ajnani* thinks 'only the body is myself', whereas the *Jnani* knows 'all this is the Self' or 'all this is Brahman'; if there be pain, let it be. It is also part of the Self. The Self is perfect".

"Now with regard to the actions of the *Jnanis*, they are only so called because they are ineffective. Generally the actions get embedded as *samskaras* (impressions) in the individual. That can be only so long as the mind is fertile, as is the case of the *ajnani*. With a *Jnani* the mind is only surmised; he

has already transcended the mind. Because of his apparent activity the mind has to be inferred in his case, and that mind is not fertile like that of an *ajnani*. Hence it is said that the *Jnani's* mind is Brahman. Brahman is certainly no other than the *Jnani's* mind. *Vasanas* cannot bear fruit in that soil, His mind is barren, free from the *vasanas*, etc.

"However, since *prarabdha* is conceded in his case, *vasanas* also must be supposed to exist. But they are only *vasanas* for enjoyment, leaving no impressions to be the seeds for future karma."

Note: In this text we have a full view of the *Jnani's* state: in pains, in action, in the working out of an old, and the generation of a new, karma, etc. It all amounts to this; his perceptions of pain and pleasure and of the world are exactly like those of the *ajnani*, as we have discussed in Note 45 of the last chapter. He sees other bodies and his own exactly as others see them, but, unlike others, he knows the truth about them. A peasant who, for the first time goes to a cinema-show and sees fierce fire raging on the screen, starts screaming and tries to run out of the theatre, taking the fire to be real; whereas the others sit back in their chairs unconcerned. This is the exact difference between the *Jnani* and the *ajnani* in their perceptions. Both see the very same sights, yet their knowledge of them vastly differs.

As for the actions of *Jnani* they are equally productive - often even more so - as those of the *ajnani* (the word 'ineffective' in the text is likely to be misrepresented as qualifying actions, whereas it qualifies the production of *samskaras*, but they are without *vasanas*, although they appear as if they were. They resemble Coleridge's wonderful pen picture of "a painted ship on a painted ocean", though ship and ocean are real. The actual ship is there, the actual ocean is also there, but there is no movement in either on account of the curse. The same are the *vasanas* of the *Jnani* which leave no impressions on his mind. The driving force in an action which produces Karma is its motive, which is absent in the *Jnani's*; hence there is no creation of a new karma for him. The actor is there, the action is also there, but the driving force of the action is, in his case, automatic, being impersonal, *vasana* free. The *Srutis* compare it to the fried seed which can no longer sprout. That is why the action of the *Jnani* is viewed as inaction. The *Jnani* appears to act, and efficiently too, but he is not acting at all. This is the significance of inaction in action and action in inaction. The motiveless mind is Brahman Itself. This is one of the most revealing statements of Bhagavan.

Reminiscences

Tamil Original - by Sri Kunjuswami
English Translation - by K. Subrahmanian

Translator's Note

Sri Kunjuswami is one of the greatest devotees of Sri Bhagavan. He went to Sri Bhagavan in his teens in 1920 and served him till Sri Bhagavan's *nirvana* in 1950. He lives, moves and has his being in Sri Bhagavan. At 95, he talks about Sri Bhagavan and his life with the enthusiasm of a young man. Those who listen to him are transported to a different world altogether. Living a simple and austere life at Sri Ramanasramam, he is rendering invaluable service by sharing his experiences with the seekers.

Reminiscences by Sri Kunjuswami is one of the best books on Sri Bhagavan and his devotees. It is written in simple Tamil. It was dictated by Sri Kunjuswami to Smt. Pankajakshi Ammal at Tiruvannamalai. Devotees of Sri Bhagavan owe a debt of gratitude not only to Sri Kunjuswami but also to Smt. Pankajakshi Ammal.

15.4.92
K. Subrahmanian

REMINISCENCES

God's Gift of Grace

I was born in January 1897 in Cherakkodu, a village between Palghat and Chittoor in Kerala. I am the third child of my parents, who belonged to the middle class. There was nothing unusual about me till my third year. However, I neither played with other children nor cried petulantly. I used to sit quietly in some place. Observing my unusual behaviour, my father showed my horoscope to my maternal uncle, who was an expert astrologer. After studying the horoscope, he said with delight; "This is not a child we deserve; it is a diving one. In the matter of food and other things, you must be extra careful with this child." My father was very happy to hear this. He had read *Kaivalyam* (*Kaivalya Navaneetha*) and other *Vedantic* works and was a deeply religious person. Hence he was very happy that he had been blessed with a divine child.

On a fine morning in January 1920, I set out for Tiruvannamalai without informing at home. Thinking that I would not return to that house, I prostrated to the house and my parents within and left my village. I thought someone might spot me if I went to Palghat station; so I went to a very small unimportant railway station called Kanjikodu and asked the booking clerk when the train to Tiruvannamalai would arrive. I was told that it would come in the evening. I waited in fear of being recognised by someone known to me. I forgot hunger and thirst in my fervent desire to see Sri Bhagavan. As I had to buy the ticket with the five rupees I had, I did not eat anything till evening.

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Darshan from a Distance

There was a large stone slab where you now see a tiny wall to the east of Skandasram. Everyday we used to keep tooth powder and water over there for use by Sri Bhagavan. However cold it was, Sri Bhagavan would come and sit on the slab and clean his teeth. In the early morning sun's rays, Sri Bhagavan's body would shine beautifully. When it was very cold, devotees used to request him not to sit there, but Sri Bhagavan would not listen to them. We came to know the reason for this only later.

In Big Street, which is to the north of Arunachaleswara Temple, there was an elderly woman called Sowbagyathammal. She and a few others had taken a vow that daily they would eat only after they had seen Sri Bhagavan and Seshadriswami. Every day they used to climb the hill to have the *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan. One day Sowbagyathammal did not come. Among his devotees, if he found even one missing, Sri Bhagavan would ask whether he was all right. In the same way, he asked Sowbagyathammal the next day why she did not come the previous day. She said, "All the same I had your *darshan*, Bhagavan." Sri Bhagavan said, "But you didn't come yesterday." She replied, "I could not climb the hill because of my weakness. But I was fortunate enough to have your *darshan* from my house." She explained how she saw Sri Bhagavan when he was brushing his teeth sitting on the stone slab. She said if he brushed his teeth at the same place everyday, she would be able to see him every day from her house itself as she found it difficult to climb the hill. From then on, Sri Bhagavan brushed his teeth sitting on the stone, irrespective of weather conditions. It was a boon for other elderly people also.

Parayana and Bhagavan's Deep Meditation

At Skandasram we would sit before Sri Bhagavan every evening at 6.30 and recite *Aksharamanamalai*. Sri Bhagavan used to close his eyes reclining on the pillows. We would finish the recitation exactly at 7.30 when we generally had our supper. Once in two or three days, during the *parayana*, Sri Bhagavan would go into deep meditation. Even at the end of the *parayana*, he would not open his eyes. We used to call him gently, but Sri Bhagavan would be completely oblivious to his surroundings. To wake him up, Perumalswami, Akhandananda, Mastanswami and I would take out some conches at the ashram and blow them. The sound of the conch used to penetrate into him and bring him back to the external world slowly. On such days, we would eat only at 9 p.m. This happened frequently. Even after moving to his Mother's Samadhi at the foot of the hill, this used to happen once in a week or ten days. Dandapaniswami used to massage Sri Bhagavan's feet to wake him up, but in vain. He used to become aware of the external world only through our blowing of the conches. It is said in *Vasishtam* that Sri Krishna had to blow the conch to wake Prahladha from his *tapas*.

Significance of Namaskar

When I returned to the ashram after spending some days at Kovilur Mutt, Sri Bhagavan asked me in detail about what I did, where I went and so on. I said, "Mahadevaswamy made kind enquiries about Sri Bhagavan and the ashramites. The day I went there, Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar and his relatives came to visit Mahadevaswamy." Sri Bhagavan asked me what Chettiar did there. I said that he prostrated with great reverence before Mahadevaswamy and accepted *vibhuti prasad* from him. Sri Bhagavan asked, "Did you prostrate before Mahadevaswamy?" When I said no, he asked me why. I said, "I don't want to do *namaskar* to anyone except Sri Bhagavan." Sri Bhagavan said, "What an

intelligent, wise fellow! Is your Bhagavan only within this body on the sofa? Is he not elsewhere? If a person is devoted wholly to one person, he should not go anywhere. If you go to another place, you must do what the people in that place do. Wherever and whenever you prostrate you should think of your guru or your favourite god. If you do like this, your *namaskar* will reach the person you have in mind. That is the proper thing to do." I realised my mistake. From then on I think of Sri Bhagavan whenever I do *namaskar* to anyone.

Devotees' Adventure and Sri Bhagavan's Forgiveness

Once we decided to go to the hill top. We engaged four coolies and asked them to carry food for us and wait at the Seven Streams on the way to the top. Mrs. Talyarkhan, Cohen, some devotees from the Bose compound and some devotees from outside, in all about forty, left as a group. We prostrated before Sri Bhagavan before we left. Muruganar, Munagala Venkataramayya, Kalyanasundaram Iyer (who was working in the ashram book depot), an English devotee by name Thompson and his friend, a Zamindar's son, and the friend's bodyguard had planned to go and see first the banyan tree referred by Sri Bhagavan and later join the other party. This was a secret agreement among us and we did not tell either Sri Bhagavan or the other members of the party whom we saw off at Namasivaya Cave.

Keeping in view the three streams mentioned by Sri Bhagavan, we started climbing the hill at 6 a.m. Around noon, we crossed the three streams and reached a steep place. We could not see either the foot or the top of the hill. We were perplexed. We could not see Muruganar. We looked for him and found him in a bush. When we called him, he came crawling on all fours like a child. We asked him why he walked like that. He said, "How should I walk then?" Venkataramayya was lying on the ground breathless. Kalyanasundaram Iyer was speechless. Thompson was sitting absolutely stunned. His friend and the servant were sobbing in fear. I, who was responsible for all this, did not know what to do.

'This is my end,' I thought. I felt wretched that I would be leaving the world without seeing Sri Bhagavan's face. I wept. Even if I was saved, if one of my companions died, how could I go and see Sri Bhagavan? In case such a thing happened, I felt I should give up my life also. The thought that I wouldn't see Sri Bhagavan any more made me feel wretched. Till then I had not prayed for anything. On this occasion a prayer came out of me; "Oh Lord! See that we don't meet our end without seeing you. Please forgive us."

Almost immediately I saw a wood cutter at a distance and shouted to him. He did not respond thinking that we were forest guards. We waved our ochre robe and said we were from the ashram and he need not be afraid of us. He came to us and said, "Why did you come here? You can't go to the hilltop from here." When we said that we wanted to go to the Ezhusunai, he took us by our hand and brought us to the others, who were waiting for us. By Sri Bhagavan's grace, there was a light shower which drenched us and we felt cool and refreshed.

The others had eaten and wondered what had happened to us. Looking at our torn clothes and the scratches on our body, they teased us for attempting to go to the *banyan* tree without telling them.

Tirupugazh Sachidananda - Swami of Vallimalai

Sri Bhagavan generally emphasised the path of *jnana* but he used to give different instructions to different people depending on the seeker's maturity level. Sachidananda Swami, known earlier as Ardhanari, worked as a cook in the palace of the Maharaja of Mysore. At that time, he suffered from acute stomach pain. The pain remained despite treatment by eminent doctors. In 1908, at the age of 38, at the instance of a devotee by name Nalla Kothan, he went to Palani and drank the abhishekam milk and was cured of the stomach ailment. He became deeply devoted to Lord Subrahmanya. He devoted himself to the service of Sri Subrahmanya at Palani from 1908 to 1912. In Palani he was called 'Mysoreswami'.

During his pilgrimage, he came to Tiruvannamalai on 21.12.1912, on Tiruvadirai day, to have the *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan. He himself has narrated his experience in the following words: "I joined the crowd waiting to see Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan came out of the ashram a few minutes later. I saw him with a loin cloth and a walking stick. He saw me and I saw him. Suddenly he appeared to me as the Lord of Palani. My hairs stood on end. I shed tears of joy. I was speechless. I quietly sat down."

One day Sri Bhagavan said to him, "Go down," and he went to the foot of the hill from Skandasram. He was upset that Sri Bhagavan had asked him to move down. As he was coming down with this feeling, Seshadriswami, who was at the foot of the hill, ran to him and hugged him. He recited the fourth *sloka* of Adi Sankara's *Sivamanasa Panchakam* and asked him whether there was anything similar to that in *Tiruppugazh*. Sachidanandaswami quoted a verse which had the same sense. (Grant me the Heart that will not feel itself separate but will see itself in everything.) Immediately Seshadriswami said, *Tirupugazh* is a great *mantra*; everything is in it. Please spread *Tirupugazh*. Go to Vallimalai and I will also come. So saying, Seshadriswami left. Then he realised why Sri Bhagavan had asked him to go down the hill. His mind was filled with joy.

Sachidanandaswami went to Vallimalai and established an ashram and spread *Tirupugazh*. He founded a number of *Tirupugazh sabhas* in Madras. He travelled throughout the country spreading *Tirupugazh*. On the night of 14th April 1950, Swamiji started with his disciples for Tiruvannamalai. At 8.45 when they were crossing a railway track, Swamiji stood stunned. He was about to be knocked down by a railway coach that had got itself detached. Swamiji was pulled back by his disciples. Swamiji intuitively knew of the merging of Sri Bhagavan in Arunachala that night at 8.47. He immediately rushed to Sri Ramanasram. When the *samadhi* rites took place, he sang *Tirupugazh* with great feeling. One of his devotees, S. V. Subramaniam, said, "Swami! You promised to show us Sri Bhagavan. Now we see only his body!" Swamiji said, "You fool! Where has he gone? He is here. He has given up his body, but he is in everybody now."

Conclusion

When I first heard Sri Bhagavan's name, I was thrilled. I wanted to go to Tiruvannamalai at once leaving my parents. But I could not go immediately. Later when I rushed to Arunachala, I got immersed in the Grace of Sri Bhagavan. He was my Father, Mother, Guru and God. He was and is, everything to me in this world. I don't know what good I have done to deserve his Grace, the Grace that permitted me to serve him. I have tried to communicate the taste and flavour of the nectar of Sri Ramana through my writing. Is it ever possible?

Residual Reminiscences of Ramana

by
S. S. Cohen

Preface

These few pages are the remnant of the memories which have been preserved by the author from his contact with his divine Guru, Sri Ramana Maharshi, who passed into *Mahanirvana* a little more than 25 years ago. The perspicacious reader will not wonder at their fewness but rather at their largeness, taking into consideration the author's age of 80, the long period that has elapsed between the time they were imprinted on his mind and the time (now) he was asked to write them down.

S. S. Cohen,
August 1982.

Residual Reminiscences of Ramana

On the second or third day of my arrival at Sri Ramanasramam at Tiruvannamalai in February 1936, I visited the only other foreigner resident in this place. Still standing on the threshold of his temporary lodging, I spoke loudly to the big, hulking gentleman seated at the table writing. "Good morning, Mr. Brunton." I said, "I bring you greetings from Mr. A. Bose". His answer came booming that he was not Mr. Brunton but Major Chadwick and that nevertheless I could come in, pointing to a chair, and himself turning round in his chair to face me. I entered and addressing him straightaway, I said that I had come for about a week to study the Maharshi's teaching and if I find it skull-racking like the Western philosophy which is all theory and not an ounce of experience, back I go. Major Chadwick answered: "The Maharshi is entirely different: if he is not all experience and practice, he is nothing. Brunton, I hear, is expected in a day or two".

That night in our stroll after dinner, Brunton advised me not to be in haste to judge, the Maharshi's influence and teaching and that the answer the Maharshi had given me in the morning about the Veda *Parayanam* clearly indicated that I should wait. So I waited.

The dust of time gathered round me and I found myself settled down to the quiet life of the Ashram in my newly-built mud hut in Palakottu. Four, five, six months have elapsed since my arrival. I wanted, but began to notice a new turn in the working of my mind, a thing which I had not felt before, a peculiar slow but extremely subtle movement was taking place within my consciousness and I wondered what it could be and whether the Maharshi was aware of it as well.

The strict aloofness which appeared to me at first as sheer callousness on the part of the Maharshi, standing against the traditional concern said to be shown by the gurus to promote the spiritual advancement of their disciples, turned out across the years to be more potent in its action to purify, reform, guide and mature the disciples' consciousness than the guru's conscious interference. Without

this detachment, the guru is bound to grow partial and discriminative which is fatal to the intention of help, for it ends by dissipating the special concentrated power inherent for the purpose in him.

Renunciation or surrender is the cornerstone of *sadhana*, leading directly to *Mukti* itself, and with the Maharshi it was the most complete. No doubt there have always been a number of deluded devotees who tried to ingratiate themselves with him in this Ashram, not less than in other Ashrams, but Bhagavan never deviated from the neutrality in his spiritual attitude towards them, in their own interest and benefit. Answering spiritual questions he always did, but he never attempted consciously to give Self-Realization to any in all the fourteen years of my contact with him, either by touch, mental projection or any other means. Unconscious *siddhis*, the divine powers which are inherent in the Self, follow the *Jnani-Guru* like his shadow, and work out the miraculous transformation in the consciousness of the disciples at the right time, without a call for them by the *Jnani* himself. I do not speak of the conscious *siddhis* which are claimed by the "clairvoyant", "clairaudient", "occultist", "initiate" and their fraternity, for I know nothing about them. The unconscious *siddhis* are all the divine powers which adhere to the Self-Realized man who has surrendered himself completely to God or absolute Reality, and which act of their own accord without an appeal from the *Jnani* himself. The *Jnani* had already divested himself of the personal will and had merged it into that of the Divine, which alone henceforth acts until the end of the lifetime of the *Jnani*'*s* body.

My attitude towards staying or departing was now settled. I stayed and made the aim of my future life clear to myself without planning it and in spite of myself, so to say. The die is cast, as they say, and cannot be uncast. I am not going to be again a part of a world which wallows in the mucky madness after the glittering pleasures of life, even by people who appear to be same and respectable situated.

One day, I got my opportunity and told him that I always understood that Realisation was sudden. He answered that it must not be forgotten that before the suddenness there must be the maturation, which is a slow process, like the ripening of an apple on a tree. It became thus plain to me that it was of this process that I had become simply aware; that was all.

I told him that since some weeks I have been feeling a bit jaded; does Bhagavan advise me to go for a change? He answered that it was the monotony to which I had not been used which was responsible for my tiredness; I had better go for a change. And within a week I was in Bombay. It was as if I was in Ramanasramam. Yet, it was not the same. The nostalgia for Bhagavan after that period grew daily and so, soon after, I returned "home".

Tiruvannamalai at last, after 2½ years of residence is noisy Babylon, godless Bombay, I returned home on the 5th June 1948, at 8 a.m.

25th June 1948, 8-30 a.m.

I am in a mood for meditation. The hall is quiet and the devotees present are very few. The morning is fresh and Bhagavan seems cheerful. I dip - once, twice, thrice. I look at my wrist watch: it is 9-10 a.m.; Bhagavan is observing. I hear him saying something in English. It must be to me, I look at him. Yes, he is addressing me: "Grant Duff has passed away." I said, "At the age of 87?" "no, 83", he corrected. "Where, in the United States?" "Yes", he answered and fell into silence. I remarked: "I am sorry if he had to suffer before his death", to which Bhagavan answered "I don't know". As there was no further talk I dipped again till 9-40 when I left.

I hear someone from the centre of the hall raise his voice and say, "the whole trouble lies with the fact

that the Self is not perceptible and the body is. We cannot even make a conception of the Self except that it is my "being", whereas we see the body move, talk, think, etc. etc. We learn from the guru that all this is illusion, but we cannot deny our senses which speak the opposite." Bhagavan answered that that is why a trusted Guru is necessary. To the Guru all what I said is crystal clear; hence, he is in a position to teach the right way - from his experience, and you have not to believe your eyes, you have to believe him.

On this 16th day of December 1949 I was passing by the Ashram's office when I saw Major Chadwick entering it. Contrary to his habitual reticence, he was heard speaking about Bhagavan's fourth operation which was fixed for the 19th. After a few preliminary words, he grew heated at the news. Raising his gigantic voice, he admonished the authorities: "How long are you going to cut Bhagavan? Let him go without this torture. So many times you operated, what good did it all do? Let him, let him, let him go...." gathering his vocal momentum at each 'let him'. He stunned all the people present; even the hardy Sarvadhikari was numbed into silence till the Major left after a few minutes.

My sympathy was all with Chadwick, but nobody's advice was worth anything before that of the advisory inner Council which was paying the allopathic piper.

Those who visited the Ashram after the *Mahanirvana* of Bhagavan know that the old hall had since become the most holy meditation hall of the Ashram, due to its longest association with the Master as his reception hall, bedroom, office, study, and the receptacle of his sublime teaching.

And when one raises one's eyes and see his life-sized photograph installed on the very couch he had used, leaning on the very cushions which had supported his back and limbs for a good number of years, one transcends the illusion of time and space and feels as if the physical presence is actually there too, and, so, one cannot but respond in love and adoration of him who used to be called Bhagavan Ramana Arunachala, the Guru of Gurus and Supreme Consciousness and Grace personified.

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REVELATION

A Sanskrit Version of the
Ulladu Narpadu of Bhagavan Sri Ramana
with an English Translation
By
K. LAKSHMANA SARMA

"WHO"

A CENTENARY PUBLICATION

REVELATION

(SRI RAMANA HRIDAYAM)

INTRODUCTION

2. Translating into Sanskrit the work which Ramana the Sage composed in Tamil for His devotees' delight, one of His humble devotees, sustained by His grace, composed this work named *Ramana Hridayam* in easy style, for the peace of his own mind.

BENEDICTORY VERSES

4. Can there be sense of existence without something that is? Is Real Consciousness a thing other than That? Since that (Reality) dwells, thought-free, in the Heart; how can It - Itself named the Heart - be meditated on? And who is there, distinct from It, to meditate on It, the Self whose nature is Reality Consciousness? Know that to meditate on It is just to be at one with It within the Heart.

1. DISCRIMINATION

7. All the faiths that prevail in the world affirm, to begin with, (the existence of) the world, the soul and God. The two contentions, namely that One Reality is sensed as threefold, and that they are three distinct entities, are up held (as intellectual convictions) while the sense 'I am the body' persists. But the highest state is being firmly established in one's own real Nature (as the Real Self), by giving up that delusion.

23. The world is real both to the non-knower and to the knower of the Real. He that lacks knowledge of the Real believes the Real to be coextensive with the world. To the knower the Real shines as the formless One, the basic substance of the world. Great indeed is the difference between the knower of That and the non-knower.

II. THE QUEST.

28. The body, being devoid of consciousness, has no egoism of its own; no one ever says 'I did not exist in dreamless sleep'; all things come into being when this 'I' is risen; therefore search with concentrated mind for the source wherefrom this ego-sense arises.
31. When this thing known as 'I' is risen, then rises all this world; when the 'I' is not, neither does the world exist; therefore this 'I' is itself all the world : therefore (extinction of the 'I' by) the Quest of 'Who is this I?' or 'Whence is he?' is to get rid of the whole (world).

34. Diving into the Heart - restraining both speech and mind and seeking 'where shines the (original) I-Consciousness - is the direct means of winning the Awareness of the Self. The meditation 'I am not this body, I am myself That' is (useful only as) a preliminary to the Quest. Is it itself the Quest of the Self?

EXPERIENCE

35. When the mind, introverted by being engaged in the Quest of 'Who am I?' is lost in the Heart, and the ego bows his head in shame, there shines by Its own light a Pure Consciousness as the limitless 'I'; that (Consciousness) is not the spurious ego; It is the Transcendental, Infinite Reality: It is the blissful Real Self.

42. Even the statement that duality is real so long as one is striving to reach the goal, but that in the goal there is non-duality, is not at all correct. What else but the tenth man was the man in the parable, both when he himself was anxiously seeking for the tenth man as one that was missing, and when he had found himself (to be that missing tenth man)?

44. If there be the thought 'I am bound', then will arise also the thought of deliverance. When, by the Quest of 'Who am I that is bound?' the Ever-Free Real Self alone remains, ageless and deathless, to whom can the thought of bondage come? If that thought cannot arise, then how can the thought of deliverance arise to the Sage who has done with actions?

PART II
Chapter ii

NON-DUALITY

53. 'What is the light for thee (for seeing objects)?' 'By day the sun, by night lamps and the like.' 'What is the light for seeing these?' 'The eye.' 'What is the light for seeing that?' 'The mind' 'By what light dost thou perceive the mind?' 'I myself perceive it.' 'Therefore thou art thyself the Light of all lights, infinite and transcending all.' 'True. I am That.'

54. *Inside the cave of the Heart the Pure and Infinite Being Himself shines as the Self, the limitless 'I', Enter thou the Heart diving by the Quest of the Self or by holding the breath and thus be one with the Self.*

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56. *The body, like anything made of earth, is insentient; it has no sense of 'I'; therefore I am not that; also because it is certain that the Self exists in dreamless sleep, in which there is no body. 'Who is he that says I?' Or 'Whence is he?' To those that, with pure mind (seeking the Self in this way), become established in the Self, the blissful, perfect Being, namely Arunachala, Himself shines as 'I'.*

Chapter iv

MEDITATION

64. Among the six organs of various colours situated above the belly, there is one, the Heart, resembling a lily bud, two finger-breadths from the centre of the chest.
65 Its mouth is closed; in the space within it there are the (chief) nerves; it is the abode of darkness: of the (acquired) mental habits, the vital force, the mind and the Light (namely Consciousness).

69. "The Heart which is Pure Consciousness, in which the universe is reflected, and which is quite other (than the last mentioned), should be known as the one to be accepted. It is both outside and inside, and it is neither outside nor inside; It is the storehouse of all good things, for all creatures;

70. "When the mind attains fixity in this the real Heart by the Quest of the Self, there occurs the extinction of all mental taints, and the vital air ceases to move also."

Chapter vii

THE TEACHING IN BRIEF

86. I shall now set forth unmistakably the profound secret which is the supreme essence of the conclusions of the *Upanishads*. Understand that when the Self is (realised as) the Reality by the death of the ego, there remains over only that Real Self who is Pure Consciousness.

COMMENTARY

Verse 4 - The meaning of the first benedictory verse is briefly this : The mind is itself bondage; by liquidating the mind in its source - the Real Self - one attains ones own Natural State of being, as the Real Self; and that is Deliverance.

The first sentence was explained by the Master himself as follows : "Everyone is aware of two things, namely himself the seer and the world which he sees; and he assumes also that they are both real. *But that alone is real, which has a continuous existence* : judged by this test the two, the seer and his spectacle, are both unreal. These two, appear intermittently; they are apparent in the waking and dream states alone; in the state of deep sleep they cease to appear; that is they appear whenever the mind is active, and disappear as soon as the mind ceases to function. Therefore the two are but thoughts of the mind. There must be something from which the mind arises, and into which it subsides. That something must have a continuous, uninterrupted existence; that is, It must be the Reality."

The Master conveys in the above the essential teaching of *Revelation*, namely that both the world and the individual soul are unreal appearances arising from a Source, the Reality; they are like the imaginary snake seen in a rope. This is the meaning of the first sentence of the translation : *"Can there be sense of existence without something that is?"*

Then the question arises : 'Is This Reality self-manifest, or otherwise?' Things which are without consciousness are not self-manifest; they become manifest by something else; consciousness alone is self-manifest. Thus the question is whether the Reality established above is consciousness or otherwise. The answer is given by the second sentence; *'Is Real Consciousness a thing other than That?'* The implication is that the Reality is itself Consciousness.

A question may be put - Why should the Reality be described as Consciousness, and not as conscious? The answer is as follows; the mind is conscious; but its consciousness is discontinuous; in deep sleep it loses Consciousness; if the Reality also were only Conscious, and not consciousness as here taught, then It would be discontinuously conscious, just like the mind; that would compel us to imagine another conscious being, into which its consciousness subsides, and so on endlessly; there can be finality only in a being whose very nature is consciousness. Therefore It is consciousness; in fact, Its being consciousness constitutes Its reality.

This teaching is confirmed as follows. The world and its seer are but thoughts in the mind; the mind is unreal, because it has no continuity of existence; but though unreal, it is conscious; that which gives to the mind its appearance of reality is its consciousness; but this consciousness is not its own, but belongs to its source; this source must necessarily be consciousness, as otherwise it cannot be the source of the mind's consciousness; since the mind includes the world, the world cannot have a separate source. To distinguish this Consciousness which is the sole Reality, It is called Pure Consciousness.

The term 'Real Consciousness' also conveys a more intimate revelation than would appear at first sight. What we call the 'soul' is just the seer of the world, who is unreal, being but a thought of the mind. The Self, on the other hand, is an indisputable reality. Therefore, this so-called soul is not the Self. What than is the Self? It must be the Real Consciousness - the Pure Consciousness - which is the source of both the world and its seer, *Revelation* tells us that this is so; the Real Self - as distinguished from the false self, the personal soul - is this Pure Consciousness, which alone is real; therefore in our real nature we are not finite and bound; we are that transcendental Reality; bondage and suffering are delusions arising in the mind.

The question then arises; Why are we not aware of ourselves as this Pure Consciousness, mindless and worldless? Why do we falsely imagine ourselves to be finite selves in this manifold world? The answer is given in the first part of the third sentence, *'Since that (Reality) dwells, thought-free, in the Heart.'*

Sat-Darshana-Bashya and Talks with Maharshi

By 'K'

Foreword

The "Talks with Sri Maharshi" are mainly selected from conversations that D has had with him since 1912. Some of these were later incorporated into the *Ramana Gita* and one or two booklets. These talks are given with a view to introduce the general reader to the main work, the philosophy of Sat-Darshan. The conversations with Sri Maharshi have been generally in Tamil, intermixed with a few English and Sanskrit words. We do not say 'you' in talking to him, nor does he refer to himself as 'I'. They are used here for the purpose of English version. The name of 'D' is not mentioned as it is considered unnecessary for the purpose of the subject.

The Talks

Vichara not Intellectual but Inward and Subtle

D: If I go on rejecting thoughts can I call it *Vichara*?

M: It may be a stepping stone. But really *Vichara* begins when you cling to your Self and are already off the mental movement, the thought-waves.

D: Then *Vichara* is not intellectual?

M: No, it is *Anthara vichara*, inner quest.

D: That is *Dhyana*?

M: To stick to a position unassailed by thoughts is *Abhyasa* or *Sadhana*; you are watchful. But the condition grows intenser and deeper when your effort and all responsibilities are taken away from you; that is *Aroodha, Siddhi* state.

Is Brahman Beyond?

D: This seems to contradict the statements that the Self is beyond the mind, that the mind cannot know Brahman, that it is beyond thought and speech (*avangmanasagochara*).

M: That is why they say that the mind is two fold: there is the higher pure mind as well as the lower impure mind. The impure mind cannot know it but the pure mind knows. It does not mean that the pure mind measures the immeasurable Self, the Brahman. It means that the Self makes itself felt in the pure mind so that even when you are in the midst of thoughts you feel the Presence, you realise the truth that you are one with the deeper Self and that the thought- waves are there only on the surface.

D: That means the *manonasha* or the *ahamkara nasha*. The destruction of the mind or of the ego you speak of is then not an absolute destruction.

M: Yes. The mind gets clear of impurities and become pure enough to reflect the truth, the real Self. This is impossible when the ego is active and assertive.

What is My Self Now?

D: I want to know what the Heart is and where it is and so forth. But I want to have this doubt cleared first. I am ignorant of my own truth, my knowledge is limited, imperfect. You say "I" means the Self, *Atman*. But the *Atman* is said to be always self-aware whereas I am unaware ...

M: People always fall into this confusion. What you call your self now is not the real Self which is neither born nor dies.

D: Then you admit that what I call my self is the body or part of the body.

M: But the body is matter (*Jada*), it never knows, it is always the known.

D: Then, if I am neither the *Atman*, the Self nor the *Anatman*, the not-self....

M: I am coming to the rescue. Between spirit and matter, the self and the body, there is born something which is called the *Ahamkara*, the ego-self, *Jiva*, the living being. Now what you call your self is this ego-self which is different from the ever-conscious Self and from unconscious matter, but which at the same time partakes of the character of both spirit and matter Chetana and *Jada*.

D: Then when you say "know thyself" you want me to know the ego-self?

M: But the moment the ego-self tried to know itself, it changes its character; it begins to partake less and less of the *Jada*, in which it is absorbed, and more and more of the Consciousness of the Self, the *Atman*.

Introduction to Sat Darshana Bashya

I - On Non-Duality

Let us take the instance of a pot. When the form of the pot is perceived without the knowledge that the pot is made of clay, no one denies the truth of this form or the validity of its perception on the ground that he has no knowledge of the substance of which it is made, and thus of the true character of the pot.

Similarly, we do not deny the form or its perception when we gain knowledge of the true nature of the pot, *viz*, that it is made of clay. Both the statements that the material of the pot is clay and that it is of a particular shape, can be truly made of the pot. The knowledge that the pot is of clay neither contradicts nor is incompatible with the knowledge that it has a particular shape. Nor does the predication that the pot has a particular form negate the substantial truth that the pot is of clay. Therefore, it has to be admitted that the truth of the thing is two-fold according to the view-point and understanding capacity of the enquiring mind. That the pot is made of clay may be termed the substantial truth of the pot and that it has a particular shape, its formal truth. Both are true and together give the whole truth of the pot.

To sum up: To know the world as it appears to my imperfect understanding is a partial knowledge which ignores the substance. A knowledge of the world of name and form without knowing its substantial reality is imperfect knowledge. Partial knowledge, as such and in itself, is only imperfect but not false. It is the mistaking of the partial truth for the whole that is false knowledge. As this partial knowledge is an imperfect understanding, too gross to penetrate to subtler truths, it is almost like ignorance. Since it moves in a futile circle, apprehending only the formal without getting at the substantial truth, and often leads to error and mischief, it is referred to by the disparaging term *ajnana* (ignorance). It is when Brahman, the root-substance of all existence, is realised that there is clear realisation of the whole truth that Brahman, the Self of all existence, is not different from its own formation as world- existence and soul-existence. That alone is complete knowledge, that alone is integral truth.

IV - The 'I' Sense

As the ego, which is the direct and immediate sense of 'I', is centred and figured in each of the distinct and separate individuals in a subtle movement of life-force and mind-stuff, it is termed *Jiva* here. This sense of 'I' is separate in each individual being and preserving the distinctness of the individual, behaves in a manner that would strengthen the individual's distinct character. But, such a movement of the ego or the apparent self has its root and support in something that is the real basis of individuality and that does not move with or lose itself in the movement of the apparent self. a something that is a continuous conscious principle related to the past, present and future; that is the Real Self signified, the Lakshyartha, in the individual, of which the ego is the apparent self. This latter is different in different individuals and is loosely called the *Jiva Atman*. But, *Atman* the self is really one; the self of all individuals as of all existence is one. But, *Jivas* or living beings are many, as many as the individuals are formed. These are soul-formations that are dissoluble in time, unlike their supporting self which is eternal, being identical with the Infinite Eternal which maintains its many-centred existence in an endless movement of formation and dissolution.

Thus, we see that there are three distinct senses in which 'I' is used. The supreme meaning of 'I', its *Paramartha*, is the *Purusha* who becomes the *Lakshyartha* (the signified sense) in the individual, as it is the same self that presides over individual existence and the immediate or apparent sense of 'I' (*Vachyartha*) is the ego or the apparent self formed temporarily for purposes of individuation. Threefold then is the sense of the Self, the 'I' and in its threefold sense it is to be understood.

Verse 6:

To him who holds the self as having form
God has form and so has the world.
But who is there to see in the formless self?
Itself is the Eye - limitless, one and full.

The question is asked 'Who is there to see in the formless Self?' If the seeing self is formless who is there to see? The infinite Self is itself the Eye, one limitless and full. Here one is reminded of the Upanishad that refers to Brahman as that in which the Self has become all beings (existences).

The Self is the all; it is that which has become all this; and there is nothing for the self to see outside of itself or apart from it as it includes (lit. devours), all forms and transcends them (lit. shines forth). Here, there is no knowledge of distinction between seer and seen; hence the Upanishad describes the character of the One, the Infinite (*Advaita*, *Akhanda*) by putting the question 'whom to see and by what?' (*Tat kena kam pashyet*). Here also the same question is put 'Who is there to see?' The answer is obvious; there is none. 'Why?' 'Itself is the Eye'. The Supreme Brahman is denoted by the third person 'Itself'. It is mentioned as the Eye to denote that it is Consciousness. It is 'One', without a second Infinite. It is 'limitless' or endless 'the full', the all-pervasive. If it is mentioned as 'seer' then the question may arise that there is 'the seen' apart from the seer. To avoid it, the word 'eye' (*drishti*), is used in the sense of sight or awareness (consciousness) and not in the sense that there is a seer apart from the sight.

Verse 10.

For perception of the Truth, worship of the Supreme
In name and form is means indeed.
But the state of being that in natural poise of Self,
That alone is perception true.

And this is the *Nishta*, the settled state in the Supreme Reality, in the one Substance, support and basis of the worshiper and the worshipped, in which is realised the identity of self with Brahman. In this verse, Truth-perception is described to be the highest poise of the Self. In a subsequent verse (the 23rd), Self-perception or God-realisation is said to consist in the *Jiva* or soul becoming food, i.e., object of enjoyment or experience to the Lord. So we have two descriptions of the one exalted state, *Sat-darshan* and *Atma-darshan*, Truth-perception and Self-Realisation. Similarly in the two invocatory verses commencing the work, this Supreme Brahman was described to be both Impersonal and Personal, Impersonal for purposes of *Kaivalya Nishta* (the sole supreme poise), and Personal for *Sayujya*, (conscious union of the soul with Brahman). Thus we are reminded that the two aspects are presented for the two distinct paths of knowledge and devotion, that ultimately culminate in a Supreme Realisation, which, in view of the Oneness of the being in the *Jiva* as well as in the *Ishwara* is

mentioned as Sat-darshan (Nishta) and in view of the *Jiva's* relation in world-existence to *Ishwara* is named *Atma Darshan* (*Sayujya*).

Verse 23.

'See thyself and see the Lord.'
That is the revealed word and hard is its sense indeed.
For the seeing self is not to be seen.
How then is the sight of the Lord?
To be food unto Him, that indeed is to see Him.

The sense of authoritative utterance 'See the self and see the Lord' is difficult to grasp. For if the Self itself cannot be seen, how can the question of seeing the Lord arise? Here it is the nature of 'seeing', perception or realisation of the Self that has got to be understood. With the object of revealing its true character, the seeing of the Lord is described by an illuminating phrase as being 'food unto Him'. The seeing soul is never seen; it is always the seer, the subject never an object to be apprehended by anything other than itself. If this soul, the ego-self, the (*Jiva*), the subjective being, attempts to know its Lord, its own deepest being, it automatically withdraws itself from its pre-occupations with divergent thoughts in the subjective or divergent forms in the objective existence, and finds itself drawn to something deeper than itself and once it experiences its original being, its source, to deep Self in this manner, it ceases to be cut off in consciousness from its Supreme source to which it thus becomes a food, as it were, an experience and an enjoyment.

Salutations to Sri Ramana

Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni, the foremost Sanskrit poet and scholar of his time, was universally respected for his austere and pure life, his scathing criticism of misguided usages, his profound yet liberal views regarding temples, women and the depressed classes and his uncompromising crusade against false interpretations of the *Vedas* and *Sastras*. He was loved for the simplicity of his life, his suave company and his generosity. He would not admit any one as his superior nor would he pose himself as any other's superior. He befriended the weak and the oppressed, freely mixed with the intelligentsia of the country and was always free from care or anxiety. His trust in God was unbounded and his love and respect for Sri Ramana Maharshi was remarkable.

40 Verses in Praise of Sri Ramana

35. What is the fate of the babe not suckled by the mother? Where is the escape for the sheep with whom the shepherd is enraged? Where is succour for the poor man against the wrath of God? How will these beings of poor understanding conquer misery, if you, O Master! do not relieve the refugees at your holy feet of their burden of errors and doubts?

38. O Lord Ramana! I am now far away from your holy feet when divine grace happens to play on me; yet my strong faith in the space-destroying might of your glory like the rays of the sun, keeps my mind

in quiet poise in this crucial hour.

39. Good luck accumulated to the Red Mount, Arunachala, for its having sheltered numerous sages in the past, has now grown incomparable because Lord Sri Ramana Maharshi has chosen this hill among many other holy place, for his abode.

40. Sri Ramana Maharshi is an ideal held out before mankind because of his great depth of Peace, his intrepid flow of Power, his extraordinary development of dispassion, his melting love, his bright wisdom which flashes over the encircling darkness of ignorance and his beautific life.

Ganapati, the son of Narasimha, of the lineage of Vasishta has thus adored Sri Ramana Guru in forty slokas.

Self-Realization

Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi

By
B. V. Narasimha Swami

Chapter V - Born Anew

The crisis of Venkataraman's life, the great awakening that converted his listlessness and dull life into one of lofty realisation and devotion to ideals, came about in the middle of the year 1896, when he was in his seventeenth year - the age at which the greatest number of religious persons have experienced their 'conversion' or started a new life. Long after this event, he was often queried by his devotees as to how he was transformed, and the following is substantially what he himself said:

"The shock of fear of death made me at once introspective, or 'introverted'. I said to myself mentally, i.e., without uttering the words - 'Now, death has come. What does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.' I at once dramatised the scene of death. I extended my limbs and held them rigid as though rigor-mortis had set in. I imitated a corpse to lend an air of reality to my further investigation, I held my breath and kept my mouth closed, pressing the lips tightly together so that no sound might escape. Let not the word 'I' or any other word be uttered! 'Well then,' said I to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body, am "I" dead? Is the body "I"? This body is silent and inert. But I feel the full force of my personality and even the sound "I" within myself - apart from the body. So "I" am a spirit, a thing transcending the body. The material body dies, but the spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. I am therefore the deathless spirit.' All this was not a mere intellectual process, but flashed before me vividly as living truth, something which I perceived immediately, without any argument almost. 'I' was something very real, the only real thing in that state, and all the conscious activity that was connected with my body was centred on that. The 'I' or my 'self' was holding the focus of attention by a powerful fascination from that time forwards. Fear of death had vanished at once and forever. Absorption in the self has continued from that moment right up to this time. Other thoughts may come and go like the various notes of a musician, but the 'I' continues like the basic or fundamental *sruti* note which accompanies and blends with all other notes. Whether the body was engaged in talking, reading or anything else, I was still centred on 'I'. Previous to that crisis I had no clear perception of myself and was not consciously attracted to it. I had felt no direct perceptible interest in it, much less any permanent disposition to dwell upon it. The consequences of this new habit were soon noticed in my life.

Chapter VII - A Word in Parting

The parting letter runs thus:

in search of my Father and
"I have ^ in obedience to his command, started from here. THIS is only embarking on a virtuous enterprise. Therefore none need to grieve over THIS affair. To trace THIS out, no money need be spent.
Your College fee has not been paid. Rupees two are enclosed herewith."

Thus ———-

The opening sentence blurts out an 'I'. The individual consciousness is then to the fore and clearly noticed by the reader. But in the very next sentence, the philosopher's stone touches and transmutes the baser metal (the individual ego) before the reader's eyes into the gold of an impersonal or expanded 'I'. The next phrase after 'I', in the letter is (my Father). Here leaps the blest ego on to Heaven, asserting a son's right to visit the father. The baseness of the ego is immediately lost, and the survivor is the 'Son of God.' He is like his Father, a spirit, and not a "cunning cast of clay." The removal of *dehatma buddhi* (the idea 'I am the body'), this disappearance of the earth-stain from the writer, furnishes the clue to the otherwise puzzling term (this) in the following sentences. Reference is made by the enlightened soul of the writer in the second sentence, to the journey to Tiruvannamalai; and in describing himself, the third person neuter is employed. Not 'I', but 'this' is what launches on the enterprise. What leaves Madurai for Tiruvannamalai now (i.e., from the second sentence onwards) is not the spirit, that is already getting absorbed in God, but the body, viewed clearly as distinct from the spirit. Then comes the letter to a close with a "Thus ————." Here, in place of the dashes, a signature would have been appended by Venkataraman of earlier years. But on this occasion, the personality which began with an 'I' had melted into 'this' in the succeeding lines, and at the close there was evidently no person remaining at that time and at that place to sign the letter.

Chapter IX - At the Father's Feet

Alighting at Tiruvannamalai station on the morning of 1st September 1896, Venkataraman beheld his "promised land" in the "starry-pointing" towers of Arunachaleswara's Temple from afar. As with the Saint Nanda, the very sight of the towers filled his soul with joy, arising not merely from the sense of achievement but also from the close proximity to Bliss itself. With quick steps and a bounding heart he proceeded straight to the great Temple. The gates of the three high compound walls and all the inner doors were open. There was not a soul beside him there; and it looked as though the Father was thus preparing to welcome his 'beloved son', who marched straight to the inmost shrine, the Holy of Holies without any hindrance and addressed Arunachaleswara (in the shape of a *lingam*) thus:

O God, obedient to Thy call,
Here I have come, deserting all.

That moment all physical and mental excitement disappeared; he felt a soothing sensation and his cup

of bliss was full to the brim.

On the very day of his arrival he had aimlessly walked to the Ayyankulam Tank and thrown away the bundle of sweetmeats given to him at the Kilur Bhagavatar's house, saying to himself, "To this block (*i.e.*, the body) why give any sweetmeat?" As he walked back from the tank and came near the temple some one accosted him and asked, "Do you want to have your tuft of hair shaved off?" "Yes," replied the young Swami, who was immediately taken to a barber and had the entire hair on his head shaved off.

As a boy at Dindigul and Madurai he was noted for the beauty of his hair (fine, long, jet-black locks) and now at one stroke he parted with this without a sigh. A clean-shaven head was the token of asceticism (*sannyasa*), *i.e.*, of parting with all the vanities of the world, and entering upon a solemn course of life in which things far higher, far more serious, should occupy every minute of one's attention. He then tore off his cloth to shreds, and, wearing one of them as a loin-cloth, cast away the rest and all his money, amounting to three rupees and a half. He also removed his sacred thread from his body and threw it away. He was not going to touch, and never after did touch, money.

One day when the young Swami was sitting on the central dais of the *mantapam* plunged in meditation, he found stones whizzing from behind and front. Luckily they did not hit his body. But he moved to the dark recess of a large pit (known as Patala Lingam) in the *mantapam*, where he hoped to be free from such attentions. The change, however, proved to be from the frying pan into the fire. The dark pit, despite the sacred images in it, was never lit, or swept or cleaned. It was damp and full of insects. As the young *Mouni* (The silent one) sat there, enjoying the bliss of his soul, scorpions, ants, mosquitoes, and other vermin, the rightful occupants of the pit, attached themselves to the intruder's body and rejoiced in drinking his blood. The nether side of his thighs and legs, as he sat there, were full of sores from which blood and pus issued. The fact that he was completely unconscious of this only goes to prove the depth of his absorption in the Infinite.

Chapter X - Years of Strenuous Life

As the Swami continued to neglect his comforts, and even cleanliness, he rose in popular esteem. His body was besmeared with unwashed dirt, his hair became a clotted mass, and his finger-nails grew so long and curly that his hands were not useful for any purpose. He sat for some weeks on a floor which was always infested by ants and, despite their constant crawling and biting, he sat for hours with eyes closed, leaning against the wall in *samadhi*, and left on it the imprint of his back. The visitors could not endure for even a few minutes the ants which he endured for hours, days and weeks, losing his body consciousness. The Swami was therefore provided after some time with a stool in a corner, the feet of the stool being placed in water. But even then his leaning on the wall gave the ants their chance and left another impress on the wall which is even now fairly discernible. People swarmed to see this height of self-neglect; some said: "This Swami must be very old," and pointed to the length of his nails as proof. Many people jumped to the conclusion that, being so saintly, he could grant them all the boons they desired, such as wealth, health issue and salvation, and poured praises into his ears and offerings at his feet. All this developed the Swami's humility, patience, endurance, and self-restraint, (*Atma vinigraha*), though to some extent they proved a disturbance to his meditation, which however was minimised by a bamboo palisade placed round him. His fame

steadily increased as days passed; and this meant increased disturbance and increased self-restraint, though the question of food-supply (if it ever was a question) was completely solved.

Chapter XIV - M. Sivaprakasam Pillai and the Swami

When he thought of going back to his village on 4th May 1913, something remarkable took place. There were many persons with the Swami; Pillai also was sitting nearby. He went on gazing at the Swami; and ere long, he had a strange vision. The Swami's face was no longer the ordinary human face. A dazzling aura was surrounding him. From his head, lo! a golden child gradually emerged and before long re-entered it. This strange phenomenon repeated itself twice or thrice. Sivaprakasam Pillai could hold out no more. He felt deeply agitated at this sudden proof of the existence of a higher benign power. His heart welled up with emotion; tears of ecstasy flowed from his eyes; and he sobbed, unable to express what he felt. Those present did not see any vision and wondered what the matter was with Pillai. When later he communicated his vision, they cracked jokes at his expense. He was in no joking mood however.

Next evening, that is, on the 5th May, he sat before the Swami. This day also he saw a vision. The Swami was suddenly seen surrounded by a halo which was as powerful as a number of full moons thrown together. The Swami's body was shining like the golden morning sun, and again his entire body smeared with holy ashes. His eyes beamed with mercy. There were others in the room at the time, but they did not see any such vision. Pillai did not ask the Swami about these matters, nor did the Swami say anything. Two days later when Pillai went and saw the Swami, the latter appeared like a mass of crystal to Pillai's eyes. Pillai's heart overflowed with joy and he had obtained the grace of the Swami. He resolved to lead a similar life of *tapas* (austere penance) curbing all sex desires and observing *brahmacharya* (celibacy).

Chapter XV Ganapati Sastri and the Swami

A. Ganapati Sastri, known by his title Kavya Kantha, is the disciple to be mentioned.

Sastri quivered with emotion as he walked up to the Virupaksha cave. Luckily for him the Swami was seated alone on the outer pial. Sastri fell flat on his face and held the Swami's feet with both hands and his voice trembled with emotion as he cried: "All that has to be read I have read. Even *Vedanta Sastra* I have fully understood. I have performed *japa* to my heart's content. Yet I have not up to this time understood what *tapas* is. Hence have I sought refuge at thy feet. Pray enlighten me about the nature of tapas." For fifteen minutes the Swami silently gazed at Sastri as he sat at his feet in anxious expectation. None came to interrupt them at the time. Then the Swami spoke in short and broken sentences in Tamil:

"If one watches whence this notion of 'I' springs, the mind will be absorbed into that. That is *tapas*.

If a mantra is repeated, and attention directed to the source whence the mantra-sound is produced, the mind will be absorbed in that. That is *tapas*.

This instruction filled Sastri's heart with joy. He stayed for some hours and ascertained the Swami's name from the attendant Palaniswami to be Venkatarama Ayyar. Sastri immediately composed five

stanzas in praise of the Swami in which he contracted his name to Ramana which has stuck to the Swami ever since. In the letter which Sastri wrote next day to his relations and disciples he mentioned the *upadesa* (instruction) he had received from the Swami known as Brahmana Swami on the hill; and added that he must henceforth be called 'Maharshi' since his teaching was quite original, and nothing like what had been found in any book that Sastri had read. He wished all his own disciples to call Brahmana Swami, Bhagavan Maharshi. Since that date this name has come into vogue among his devotees; and to Sastri must be given the credit for its currency.

Chapter XXV - Meditation at the Asram

So far mention has been made of how Maharshi helps the ordinary run of devotees who visit him. A few who are more finely strung, perhaps more delicately attuned, mention their experiences with him, which cannot be adequately described to one who has not had a similar experience. Some say that at a glance of Maharshi or because of his mere presence (*vide. e.g.*, the entries in the diary of Ramaswamy Iyer, Ch. XVI) a current from him entered their heart and greatly assisted them in mind and body. Some say that Maharshi, in order to instruct them about the working of 'the Heart' which is said to be the seat of intuition, or Self, has asked them to place their palm on his right breast where they felt the rhythm of this peculiar heartbeat. Some of them felt something like an electric shock coursing through their entire body at the very touch of his body. Whether these phenomena are subjective or objective, the results have been the same in their spiritual course. Some disciples say that they derived similar benefit by their bodies being touched by Maharshi when he appeared before them in dreams or waking visions.

Epilogue

by S. S. Cohen

Master's Illness and Mahanirvana

He had entered his 70th year, and the chronic complaints which he had acquired during the early years of his absorption in the Ultimate Consciousness, owing to the entire neglect of his body, began to tell on him. Due to exposure to cold, rain, wind and the dampness of the underground cave (*Pathala Lingam*), in various open spaces, and on the hill, he had contracted asthma, and then an arthritic rheumatism which clung to him till the end. Signs of pronounced weakness appeared in 1947, which exposed his system to the invasion of latent or new diseases. The rheumatism itself increased in violence, and spells of nervous hiccup of long duration further weakened him and paved the way to a virulent sarcomatous growth on his left elbow, to which his body finally succumbed, after a severe illness lasting more than a year.

14th April, 1950:

"Maharshi is in a very precarious condition. The whole morning has been spent by devotees in hushed gloom and bated breaths. After the evening *darshan* which was attended by more then fifteen hundred persons, the unanimous verdict was that it was positively the last. The Master is now propped on large pillows, almost in a sitting posture to enable him to breathe freely. At 7 p.m. oxygen is administered to him for a few minutes, but , seeing it gave him no relief, he feebly asked that it should be stopped. The situation was tense; about five hundred devotees were outside in sad expectation of the solemn last moment. Blood relations, Ashram workers, and a few veteran disciples went in by

turn to have a last sight of him. When the end was known to be approaching the whole congregation with one voice took to chanting the Tamil hymns he had composed in praise of Lord Arunachala: "Arunachala Siva, Arunachala!", till it came at 8.47. Many devotees grief stricken and beating their breasts with agony, rushed to the big *darshan* Hall, to which the sacred body had been brought and made to sit cross-legged in *yoga asana*, to pay their last respects.

15th April:

At 6.30 p.m. the body which by then had received the homage of not less than about 40,000 persons was carried in a decorated palanquin, reserved for the God of the temple, to the *samadhi*. Here it was placed in the same *yoga-asana* posture into a bag made of the finest *kaddar* (home-spun cloth), which was then filled with pure camphor, and lowered into the area in the pit which had been reserved for it. Then the pit was filled to the brim with camphor, salt, and sacred ashes to preserve the body from worms and rapid disintegration, and closed with masonry work.

Sri Niranjanananda Swamigal

Feeling that his end was near, on the 28th January 1953, he called T. N. Venkataraman who is his son and successor to the Ashram's seat, his family and some Asram workers and devotees, and with thick speech, said:

"I am departing with a clear conscience and clean hands. I have not used even a pie of the Ashram funds for my own benefit. Everything here belongs to Bhagavan, and should be guarded with care and vigilance. Devote yourselves heart and soul to the service of the Lord, and in return He will shower His grace on you. Be sincere and truthful to the core of your being. Uphold our revered ancient tradition in the working of this Ashram, as I have upheld them all my life."

With him passed away the last living child of Sundaram and Alagammal.

But though this book is finished and the Maharshi, his brother and sister have left the scene, the Asram, as has already been stated, continues as a place in whose sanctity the same peace is still to be found. Pilgrims and devotees come, sit in front of the Holy Samadhi, or in the meditation hall, close their eyes and find that they are once again in the very real presence of the beloved Guru, who meant everything to them and whom for a weak moment they feared they had lost. Surprise is followed by a look of joy and, rising from their place they go on their way convinced that RAMANA LIVES.

SPIRITUAL STORIES

As told by Ramana Maharshi

Preface

Scattered throughout the religious scriptures of India, parables and stories abound, weaving a colorful thread around the most profound spiritual truths of mankind. Handed down from parent to child these religious treasures of India remain a relevant force today.

In Sri Ramana's own words the beauty and wisdom contained in such stories are made ever more beautiful and the essence made even clearer. Sri Bhagavan would not only tell the story but would act out the part to the delight of His devotees. If the story was particularly moving, tears would flow freely from His eyes. "Such was the attraction of these stories".

While Bhagavan was reading and explaining a story about Tara Vilasam His eyes became full of tears and His voice became tremulous. It looked as if the whole drama was being enacted in His presence. Noticing this Suri Nagamma remarked, "Bhagavan appears to have been transformed into Tara herself". Pulling Himself together the Master said with a smile, "What to do? I identify myself with whosoever is before me, I have no separate identity. I am universal".

Joan Greenblatt

Self-Surrender

D: I fear that Self-realisation is no easy thing to attain.

M: Why impede yourself by anticipating failure? Push on. Self-realisation will come to an earnest seeker in a trice. To illustrate this, Sri Bhagavan told the following story.

King Janaka was listening to a philosophical treatise read by the state *pandit*, where in a passage occurred to the effect that a rider who had placed one foot in the stirrup, contemplating upon realisation. could realise the Self before he lifted the other foot to place it in the other stirrup. That is, the passage taught, that when realisation comes, it comes in an instant. The king stopped the *pandit* from proceeding further, and ordered him to prove the statement. The *pandit* admitted that he was only a bookworm and was unable to impart practical wisdom. Janaka suggested that the text was either false or exaggerated, but the *pandit* would not agree to this. Though he himself was unable to impart practical wisdom, he maintained that the text could not be false or exaggerated, since it contained the words of wise Sages of the past. Janaka was annoyed with the *pandit* and in a fit of rage condemned him to prison. He then inflicted the same punishment on every *pandit* who passed for a wise man but was unable to prove this scriptural text.

For fear of being imprisoned, some *pandits* fled the country in voluntary exile. While two or three of them were running through a thick forest, a Sage called Ashtavakra (*Ashta* means 'eight' and *vakra* means 'bends'. Ashtavakra was so named because his body had eight deformities), who though

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young in age was wise in learning, happened to cross their path. Having learnt their plight, Ashtavakra offered to prove the text true to the king and thereby have the imprisoned *pandits* released. Impressed by his bold assurance, they took him in a palanquin to the king. At the sight of the Sage, the king stood up and saluted him with great reverence. Ashtavakra then ordered the king to release all the *Pandits*. Janaka thought that such an order could come only from one who had the capacity to set his doubts at rest, and hence he released all the *pandits* and asked the Sage whether he could summon the horse. The Sage advised him not to be in a hurry and suggested that they should go to a solitary spot. Thereupon the king on his horse and the Sage in a palanquin went out of the city towards the forest.

When they reached the forest the Sage asked the king to send back the retinue. The King did as he was asked, and then placing one of his feet in the stirrup, he requested the Sage to prove the scriptural text. But the Sage replied by asking whether the position in which they stood indicated a proper Master-disciple relationship. The King then understood that he should show due reverence towards Ashtavakra, and prayed to him for Grace. The Sage then addressed him as 'Janaka', since he was no longer a king and told him that before being taught *Brahma-Jnana*, a true disciple should surrender himself and all his possessions to his Master. "So be it", said the king.

"So be it" replied the Sage and disappeared into the forest. From that moment Janaka stood transfixed with one foot in the stirrup and the other dangling in the air, as if he were a statue. (Saying this Sri Bhagavan imitated the posture of King Janaka).

Time passed by, and the citizens, finding no signs of their King returning, grew anxious and began to search for him. They came to the place where Janaka was standing transfixed and were dismayed to find him unaware of their presence and indifferent to their earnest enquiries. They therefore began searching for Ashtavakra who, they thought, must be a charlatan that had cast a spell upon their king, and vowed vengeance upon him. At the same time, being concerned with the king's condition and wanting to minister to him, they brought him back to the city on a palanquin. The king, however, continued to remain in the same condition.

At last, having found Ashtavakra, the ministers entreated him to remove the alleged spell and bring the king back to his normal condition. At the same time they charged him with the responsibility for having cast the spell. Ashtavakra treated their ignorant remarks with contempt and called the name of Janaka, who immediately saluted him, and responded to his call.

The ministers were surprised. Ashtavakra told the king that he was being maliciously accused by the people of having brought him to some sad plight and asked him to tell the truth. On hearing this, the king angrily asked, 'Who said so?' The Ministers were taken by surprise and pleaded for mercy. Thereupon, the Sage advised the king to resume his normal functions, adding that *Brahma-Jnana* could be taught only to competent persons and that since the king had successfully passed the test, he would now impart it to him.

Then the Sage remained alone with the king during the night and taught him the ultimate Truth, saying "Brahman is not anything new or apart from oneself and no particular time or place is needed to realise it". He finally concluded by saying, "That Thou Art" (*tat tvam asi*). That is the Self, eternal and infinite.

The next morning the ministers found that the king called the assembly and performed his functions as usual. In the assembled Court Ashtavakra asked the king whether his former doubt about whether *Brahma-jnana* could be attained as suddenly and as quickly as mentioned in the scriptures was

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cleared, and if so to bring the horse and demonstrate the truth of it.

The king was all humility now and said: “Lord!, Because of my immaturity, I doubted the correctness of the scriptural text. I now realise every letter of it is true”. The ministers thanked the sage.

Initiation

A devotee asked, “Can anyone get any benefit by repeating sacred syllables (mantras) picked up casually?”
Sri Bhagavan replied, “No, He must be competent and initiated in such mantras”. To illustrate this he told the following story.

A King visited his Premier in his residence. There he was told that the Premier was engaged in repetition of sacred syllables (*japa*). The King waited for him and, on meeting him, asked what the *japa* was. The Premier said that it was the holiest of all, *Gayatri*. The King desired to be initiated by the Premier but the Premier confessed his inability to initiate him. Therefore the King learned it from someone else, and meeting the Minister later he repeated the *Gayatri* and wanted to know if it was right. The Minister said that the *mantra* was correct, but it was not proper for him to say it. When pressed for an explanation the Minister called to a page close by and ordered him to take hold of the King. The order was not obeyed. The order was often repeated, and still not obeyed. The King flew into a rage and ordered the same man to hold the Minister, and it was immediately done.

The Minister laughed and said that the incident was the explanation required by the King. “How?” asked the King. The Minister replied, ‘The order was the same and the executor also, but the authority was different. When I ordered, the effect was nil, whereas when you ordered, there was immediate effect. Similarly with *mantras*”.

Brahmin’s Curse

One day a Sage called Pakanar was weaving a basket in from of his house. Hearing a loud voice chanting, “Hare Ram”, he asked his sister who it was that was chanting. His sister replied that it was a Brahmin who is keeping his own daughter. Pakanar replied, “You are the hundredth person to repeat the scandal!” Meanwhile, the Brahmin having come to that place, the Sage told the Brahmin that his curse was lifted and that he could return home. Later, he explained to his sister thus: “This Brahmin was living with his widowed daughter. They were generous and kind hearted. They would invite *sadhus* and feed them with love. On hearing their generosity a *sadhu* came to visit them. He was well received and fed. The *sadhu* was immensely pleased with their devotion and decided to bless them. He just glanced once and knew what was in store for them when they die. He called the Brahmin and told him that after his death he would be tortured by a mountain of leeches in hell. On hearing this, the Brahmin fell at his feet in terror and implored him for some means of escape. The *sadhu* told him, ‘Once while you were cooking food a leech fell from the roof into the cooking pot and died, unobserved. You offered that food to a realised Sage. Since whatever is given to a Sage will be received back a thousand-fold, a mountain of leeches are in store for you’. The *sadhu* then advised the Brahmin that in order to escape this fate he should conduct himself towards his grown-up widowed daughter in such a way, as to provoke a scandal that he was having illicit intimacy with her. He assured him that when a hundred persons had uttered the scandal the sin would leave him completely, having been distributed among the scandal-mongers. The Brahmin did accordingly and you are the hundredth person to tell the scandal. So I say that the Brahmin’s curse is now removed.”

Sri Bhagavan drew from the story the following moral: "Have the best intention, but act in such a way not to win praise, but to incur blame. Resist the temptation to justify yourself even when you are just".

Swami is Everywhere

Seeing that Sundaramurthi was going away on a white elephant which had come from Kailas, the Raja of Chera whispered in the ear of his horse the panchakshara mantra and got upon it to go to Kailas. Avvaiyar, who was at the time doing *puja* to Lord Ganesar, saw them both going to Kailas and so tried to hurry up her puja as she too wanted to go to Kailas. Seeing that, Ganesar said: "Old woman, don't hurry. Let your *puja* be performed as usual. I shall take you to Kailas before they reach it." Accordingly, the *puja* was performed in due course. Waving his hand around, he said: "Old lady, close your eyes". That was all. When she opened here eyes, she found herself seated in Kailas in front of Parvati and Parameswara. By the time Sundaramurthi and Chera Raja reached the place, they found her already seated there. Surprised at that, they asked her how she had got there and were overjoyed at her *bhakti*!

After all, she was very old. So she sat opposite to Parameswara with her legs stretched out like me. Parvati could not bear that sight. She was worried because to sit with legs stretched out towards Swami, she felt, was a great insult. She respectfully suggested to Parameswara that she should be permitted to tell the old lady about it. "Oh, don't speak, don't open your mouth. We should not say anything to her." How could Parvati put up with that insult? She therefore whispered into the ear of her maid to tell the old lady, who said: 'Grandma, Grandma, don't keep your legs outstretched towards *Ishwara*". "Is that so?" She replied "Tell me on which side *Ishwara* is not present. Shall I turn this side?" said Avvaiyar. So saying, she turned her outstretched legs to another side and *Ishwara* got turned to that side; and when again she turned to a different side, He also got turned to the same side. Thus Swami got turned to whichever side she turned her legs. Looking at Parvati, *Ishwara* said: "Do you see now? You would not listen to me. See how she turns me this side and that. That is why I told you not to open your mouth". Then Parvati requested the old lady to excuse her. It is similar to that when people are asked not to stretch their legs towards Swami. Where is He not present?

Sri Ramana Reminiscences

By Prof. G. V. Subbaramayya

Introducing Prof. G. V. Subbaramayya

G. V. Subbaramayya an educationalist, professor and poet was one of the older devotees whose approach to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was exceptionally spontaneous.

The turning point and the greatest influence was of course the coming into his life of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Let's quote what he himself has to say about it; "The pole star of my life is of course my gurudev Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. At a time of distress in 1933 I was drawn to Him and the very first *darshan* plunged me into the ocean of peace and bliss. Ever since He has been the light of my life. He is my mother, father, guru and goal. He is my all-in-all; and in Him my little self and all its moorings were consummated and sublimated. In a word He is the embodiment of grace. At every step in the least incidents of my life I have come to feel with a growing consciousness the guiding hand of that Divine Grace that is Sri Ramana."

My Reminiscences of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

For over two years I had been reading the works of Sri Bhagavan and other Ashram literature. My main interest had been literary rather than philosophical. I had been struck with wonder at the style of the Telugu *Upadesa Saram* which, in its simplicity, felicity and classic finish, could equal that of the greatest Telugu poet Tikkana. I had felt convinced that a Tamilian who could compose such Telugu verse must be divinely inspired, and I had wanted to see him.

But my immediate quest at the time was for peace and solace. In the morning I had *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan in the old Hall. As our eyes met, there was a miraculous effect upon my mind. I felt as if I had plunged into a pool of peace, and with eyes shut, sat in a state of ecstasy for nearly an hour. When I came to normal consciousness, I found some one spraying the Hall to keep off insects, and Sri Bhagavan mildly objecting with a silent shake of his head.

On October 31st, 1937, my two year old daughter Indira suffered two fits, the second more severe than the first. Suddenly she became unconscious, all vital organs stopped functioning and she seemed practically dead. The Allopathic doctor declared his helplessness and advised Ayurvedic treatment. Branding between the eye-brows by an old man with his lighted tobacco-pipe made the child moan feebly and slightly revived the vital functions. Still she did not rally but lay moribund. Two Ayurvedic physicians sent for, one after another, could not be found. At this crisis my eye lighted upon the picture of Sri Bhagavan, and I prostrated saying within, "O Bhagavan, all human aid having failed, you alone must save her." Getting up, I mechanically opened the drawer, took out a telegraph form, and sent an express message praying for Sri Bhagavan's Grace upon the child. The telegraph authorities sent word that the message would reach the Ashram at 7 p.m. Precisely at 7 p.m. both the Ayurvedic physicians arrived simultaneously and Sri V. V. Narayanappa alone came, put into my hands an envelope addressed to me, and said, "Here is Sri Bhagavan's *Prasad* for the child." It struck me as a miraculous response of Sri Bhagavan to my prayer. Sri Narayanappa explained that it was the *prasad* which I

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had got for him the previous year when he had been ill, and which he had preserved in the same envelope. He felt he should make use of it for the ailing child. The two doctors consulting together treated the child and assured me that she was out of danger. That night, sleeping beside the child, I had a marvellous dream. I was in Sri Bhagavan's Hall. Sri Bhagavan was reclining on His couch as usual. In front of Him stood a dark, fierce-looking person of gigantic stature. Sri Bhagavan with His forefinger motioned to him three times to leave the Hall. Accordingly the stranger left by the first entrance. Then Sri Bhagavan turned to me, called me near and enquired, "How is your child?" I replied, "Bhagavan, by Your Grace, she is better." Then Sri Bhagavan said, "She will be all right, don't fear," and put His hand on my back. At His touch I thrilled and the dream melted.

A Vaishnava devotee, who was a high official at Simla, brought all the idols that he worshipped daily, and handed them to Sri Bhagavan, probably desiring the sanctity of Sri Bhagavan's touch. Sri Bhagavan seemed much interested in examining them. The devotee said, "Bhagavan, people scoff at me, calling me a 'superstitious idolater.' " Sri Bhagavan told him, "Why don't you retort by calling them worse idolaters? For do they not wash, dress, embellish, feed and thus 'worship' their body so many times every day. Is not the body the biggest idol? Then who is not an idol worshiper?"

In the evening Sri Bhagavan recalled a marvellous occurrence. He said, "Some time ago, a paralytic was brought in a conveyance and brought into the Hall in the arms of some persons and placed before me. I was looking at him as usual. After about half an hour, the man with some effort got up by himself, prostrated, and rising came forward and handed to me a notebook. I found it to be his horoscope wherein it was stated that he would have *darshan* of a Mahatma by whose Grace he would be cured miraculously. Then man after expressing his fervent gratitude walked by himself to his conveyance outside the Hall. All people present were struck with wonder which I also shared because I had not consciously done anything for him. Now Sri Bhagavan again repeated that a *Jnani* could not have any *sankalpa* (will) of his own.

In the afternoon Sri Bhagavan related another story. A Brahmin and his cook went on a pilgrimage. The cook dipped a bitter-gourd in all *tirthams* (holy waters). When he cooked it afterwards, it tasted bitter as before. "So," said Sri Bhagavan, "how can the bitter taste in the pilgrim go by mere bathing in holy waters, unless the mind becomes edified and sweetened." Sri Bhagavan also narrated two more stories from the same book.

Shortly after my return home, I had a marvellous experience of Sri Bhagavan's Grace. It was early morning. I had been sitting for a long time in meditation. Gradually I felt lighter and easier. Finally when I felt as light as a feather floating in the wind, I lost the body-consciousness. Still I was fully aware. I flew at a great height in the sky. After a time I saw big *Gopurams* (temple-towers) fully illumined against the background of a majestic Hill and knew that the place was Tiruvannamalai. In a few minutes I was hovering over the Ashram near the cow-shed on the south and came down to a few feet above the ground. I saw Sri Bhagavan casting a torch light into some bushes near by. I bowed to Sri Bhagavan even from the mid-air. Immediately I rose to a great height and flew back. On the return flight I saw down below, some blazing fires and heard gun-shots, at one place. I continued the flight till I recognised my home town. Then I stopped, descended and came back to my seat in the central hall of my residence. At once I regained the body-consciousness and opened my eyes. Except

that the body disappeared and reappeared, my awareness was continuous, without a break. The next day I read in the Papers that at the town of Arcot, between Tiruvannamalai and Conjeevaram, there was a big riot and incendiarism that very night and the Police resorted to firing to disperse the mob. I never had a like experience before or after, and I can only regard it as a miracle of Sri Bhagavan's Grace for affording me His actual *darshan*.

That day a most extraordinary thing happened to me. It was Saturday, and I was to attend college on Monday, so I wanted to start that noon. After arranging everything, I went to Sri Bhagavan to prostrate and take leave. On all such occasions, Sri Bhagavan would either say, "yes, go" or give a silent nod of approval. But this time Sri Bhagavan said, "Your college reopens on Monday. Why should you go now?" I at once replied, "I won't go now. I shall stop," and I cancelled the arrangements. That whole afternoon, He was specially gracious to me and took great pains to teach me the Malayalam alphabet. That evening as He was starting to go up the Hill, I again asked Him whether I might go by the evening train. He enquired whether it was a through train. I replied "No it will stop at Katpadi." Sri Bhagavan said, "In that case, why should you spend the night at Katpadi station? Why not be here?" I again postponed my journey. The next early morning train was the last for me. So at about 5 a.m. I went for Sri Bhagavan's *darshan*. As soon as He saw me, He enquired whether I had taken breakfast and got ready to start. I said, "Yes" and prostrated; as I got up, His look at me had completely changed, His eyes were wide open, fixed and steady. He seemed to be seeing through me and beyond me into the Infinite. I had never had such a gaze from Sri Bhagavan before. I felt like Arjuna in Visvarupa Sandarshan. I was face to face with pure, Divine Majesty, and stood spell-bound. Five minutes, ten minutes passed. The cart-man was pressing. I mumbled the words, "I take leave," but there was no response, not the least change in the lustrous, long gaze. I came away overwhelmed with awe and fear. Everyone said that the way Sri Bhagavan now treated me was unprecedented and that it signified some momentous change for me. This forecast was confirmed by an event that occurred in my home within three months.

A few days later I had a peculiar dream. I dreamt that I was in the Ashram but could not see Sri Bhagavan anywhere. I searched and searched, and wept and wept at not finding him till fatigue overcame me and plunged me into slumber. Then I again had a dream (within the dream) that I sat face to face with Sri Bhagavan. In that position I recollected the previous disappearance of Sri Bhagavan and dismissed it as a dream. I felt that my being then in the presence of Sri Bhagavan was the only reality. This vision was so vivid and realistic that by comparison the waking-consciousness after I awoke seemed hazy. The hard core of reality seemed to melt and dissolve. The dreaming and waking states having submerged their boundaries seemed to flow into each other, to mingle and become one. As I related the above experience in a letter to the Ashram, I wondered whether I was really awake, whether the so-called waking activity including the writing of that letter was not part of an extended dream. As I recall that incident now, I may be pardoned for confessing a doubt whether even this writing is not also a continuation of the dream from which the final waking will be into the one Reality that is Sri Bhagavan.

One night last year I had a marvellous dream. In a big *choultry* on a hill-top I saw Sri Bhagavan and Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitham seated before me. My heart overflowed with joy to see the two great Souls together. Sri Sankaracharya enquired how far I had advanced in my

study of Sanskrit. Sri Bhagavan replied to him saying that my Sanskrit knowledge was up to the mark. Thereupon Sri Sankaracharya recited a *Rik* from the Vedas and asked me to translate the *rik*. I did it to his satisfaction. Then *tirtham* (Holy Water) was brought in a vessel. Sri Bhagavan first took a spoonful and passed it to Sri Sankaracharya who also tasted another spoonful and handed it to me to distribute among the vast crowd of devotees that filled the hall. I went round and as I served the last person, I found that the last drop of *tirtham* was gone. Then I brought back the empty vessel. Sri Sankaracharya asked me whether I had taken the *tirtham* myself, I replied "No." Then Sri Bhagavan observed "It does not matter. Distribution to others is *prasad* (Grace) to yourself." Now leaves were spread before all for *bhiksha*. As it was getting dark, I tried to switch on the electric lights. At my first trial the lights did not burn. But as I turned the switch a second time, all the lights flashed on and I woke up.

"Distribution to others is *prasad* to yourself."

Verily these Reminiscences are the *tirtham* (Holy Water) that has been distributed to the readers, and that is the Prasad (Grace) of Sri Bhagavan to This humble servant.

Postscript

Just when I finished writing the last word my daughter Alagamma came running to me and served me coconut water saying 'Here is *tirtham* from Mother after her worship of God.' SO THAT IS THAT!

Srimad Bhagavata

Condensed by S. S. Cohen

To
The Ever-Effulgent
SRI RAMANA

PREFACE

What distinguishes the *Bhagavata Purana* from the other monumental works which claim to be the workmanship of Vyasadeva or Badarayana, and gives it the supreme sanctity it possesses in the eyes of the pious Hindus, is not only its exhaustive account of the life of the Lord's fullest manifestation on earth as Sri Krishna *Avatara*, but His fullest teaching to His beloved disciple Uddhava on the eve of His withdrawal from the world, which sometimes goes by the name of *Uddhava Gita*. This teaching, notwithstanding what the historians say of its age and authorship, is regarded by many as a development and an elucidation of the instructions He had given to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra and form the celebrated *Bhagavad Gita*.

Whereas the latter is purported to have been propounded in the midst of a great human crisis, which threatened to engulf millions of warriors who were fighting for a righteous cause, to nip in the bud the despondency which was growing in the hearts of its foremost leaders, the former is the direct, untrammelled, uninhibited teaching of a Master to His disciple, who had no other aim in life but to attain union with Him, and, as such, it is of the greatest practical value to those who seek to reach the same height, the State of the Lord Himself, which is the Supreme Enlightenment or Liberation. *Srimad Bhagavata* is, in effect, planned to resolve all the spiritual doubts of the ardent, self-dedicated seekers of all ages, as represented by a great, pious king - Parikshit - who is sitting on his deathbed praying for light from the assembled sages, to enable him to face calmly and with a purified, illumined mind the last solemn moments of his life. What is more, it creates in them the fervent devotion, which can impel them to make the strenuous efforts which are needed for the fruition and consummation of their spiritual yearnings.

The difference in the teachings of these two masterpieces does not actually exist save in the characters of the persons to whom they were respectively addressed, the circumstances in which they were delivered, and the developments of their themes. Great seers, ancient and modern, did not fail to recognise and extol the superiority of the *Bhagavata* in this last respect, namely, in its lucid expositions reiterated again and again in a variety of forms, in different contexts, and from every possible angle of vision, with or without illustrative anecdotes, by a number of sages - Sukadeva, the Divine Rishabha, his nine ascetic sons, Lord Kapila, the celestial Narada and many others, - and, above all, by the Supreme Teacher, Sri Krishna Himself, so that no room is left for misinterpretations or partisan interpretations, as is the case with the pithy, distilled expositions of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The *Bhagavata Mahatmya* (*Padma Purana*) says that Brahma, having weighed all the Scriptures

against the *Bhagavata*, found the latter to outweigh them all, "*because it is the embodiment of the Lord in this Kali age*," that is, it stands for Him in His physical absence. When the four Kumaras told Narada that *Bhakti, Vairagya*, and *Jnana* (devotion, dispassion and knowledge respectively), the three *padas* (feet) on which the highest *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) stands, spontaneously rise in him who daily recites it, and Narada inquired as to the reasons why these do not result from the recitation of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Bhagavad Gita*, they gave the pregnant answer that so long as the essence is not separated from the mass of the substance, as the butter is extracted from every particle of the milk, no benefit can be derived from it. This essence - the spiritual butter - is the *Bhagavata*, which has been churned out of the ocean of the *Veda* milk for the benefit of those "who are pure in heart, free from malice and envy, and are keen to hear it". (p. 2).

The reader will have no need to go very far in search of the message of the *Bhagavata* : it is given to him at its very commencement in a clear, ringing note, which is echoed again and again in the text to the very end.

"The highest good," it says, "consists in the attainment by the soul of its true, ultimate object, which is the realisation of God, the absolute Reality, through complete surrender and selfless devotion.... There can be no doubt that the object in being in a human body is not the gratification of the senses, nor the attainment of heaven through religious worship and pious acts, but the investigation into the ultimate Truth which goes by various names; *Brahman, Paramatman, Bhagavan*, etc., Who is one and indivisible admitting no duality or distinctions whatever. Rishis have realised this Truth as their very Self, as seated in their very hearts through study, devotion, and constant recital of this sacred *Bhagavata*." (p.3).

This puts in a nutshell the whole theme of the *Bhagavata* - the essential purpose of the human life, the meaning of the absolute Reality, and the way of attaining it. It practically tells us that God is our very Self and that He can be realised through inquiry or knowledge (*Jnana*) generated by intense devotion (*Bhakti*) and detachment (*Vairagya*) - the three *padas* mentioned above. There can be no rest from the ceaseless and hydra-headed misery of life till the realisation of the truth of oneself is achieved. It is the inborn urge of the soul and the object of all its endeavours, whether it is conscious of it or not, to discover its own truth and release itself from this misery and from the bondage, which arises out of its ignorance of itself which it mistakes for its body. It is this wrong identification of the insentient body with the sentient soul or self that lies at the root of this troublesome *samsara* and of all human ills and it is for its eradication that all the *Vedas* have been written and all the *sadhanas* prescribed.

This may seem to imply that the *Bhagavata* is meant only for yogis who work for immediate redemption. But to say that it is not also for the householder and the ordinary man of calm mind who aspires for happiness in his own life and peace with the world, is saying only half the truth. For, apart from their narrative appeal and the devotion they induce, its lavish, kaleidoscopic legends are mines of wisdom which do not fail to impress themselves upon the character and conduct of the thoughtful reader, especially in these days when innumerable forces are at work to divert men's attentions from their deep-seated urge of self-fulfilment and self-knowledge to the transient satisfaction of their elementary needs by the easy, descending path of rank materialism.

For this reason this condensation attempts to bring out all the stories and the instructions given in the

original, curtailing nothing but the least significant anecdotes, long lists of names which mean nothing to us today, constant iterations of ideas, hymns and accounts of the creation, and details which are likely to cause a flagging of interest in the modern reader.

In pruning these deterrents care has been taken to retain all the features, structure, and almost the very words of the original, especially in the dialogues, which form its most instructive parts, where I preserved them as quotations, using *italics* for the most significant dicta to draw earnest attention to them. I have, however, found it necessary to add my own interpretative remarks to bring clarity where needed, and these I placed in brackets to distinguish them from the text.

Readers who are not used to the *Bhagavata* will find in it frequent interruptions, lack of cohesion, and much chronological disarray in its stories, barring those relating to the life of Krishna. It has to be remembered that the author's supreme aim is to propound the sublime Truth, using the narrative as best suits his purpose, irrespective of historical sequence, to create both an atmosphere for his teaching as well as lasting impressions upon the reader's mind. Even a *grihasta* will feel uplifted by the moral lessons it imparts and by its devotional philosophy. It is, therefore, important to view the instructions, which are prodigally strewn all over the work, not as isolated discourses befitting the particular related events, and, thus, may be lost sight of no sooner read, but as essential parts of a whole system of knowledge to be carefully noted, co-ordinated and treasured in the memory as a complete scripture by itself, as the *Bhagavata Mahatmya* (previously quoted) rightly claims it to be, which promises to lead directly to *Jnana*, the portals of the supreme Liberation, without the assistance of any other spiritual work.

The contemplative student should not be misled by the easy presentation and widely diffused instructions of the *Bhagavata* to permit a single useful point to slip into oblivion. He will then find all his questions answered, even those of which he has been vaguely aware but unable mentally to grasp or formulate, and all his problems solved. Therefore to allow its blazing light to dispel the darkness of primeval *avidya* from the mind, constant repetitions and an intensely close study of it are most essential.

Vellore, 1965
S. S. Cohen

Book One
Installation of the Preacher

After Sri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga and Defender of the righteous, fulfilled His mission on earth and ascended to His abode, closing the *Dwapara* age and heralding the age of *Kali*, known as *Kaliyuga*, wherein the lowest *gunas* were to be ascendant to disturb men's minds and corrupt their hearts, the sages anxious to mitigate the hardships of the new era and realise the Lord, gathered together in the forest known as Naimisharanya and started a great sacrifice, which was to take a thousand years to complete. It was in that holy assembly that *Srimad Bhagavata*, which has been conceived by the great sage Vedavyasa, also called Badarayana, to teach the *Bhagavata Dharma* (the Supreme Religion)

or the highest worship of God, was recited by Ugrasrava Suta, who had been present at the time when the sage Suka, the son of its author, expounded it to King Parikshit on the bank of the Ganges.

Book Seven
Vishnu Avataras - I

I - X Prahlada - Narasimhavatara

Narada now takes up the story of Prahlada, Hiranyakasipu's five-year-old son, who was one of the most exalted souls that ever lived and a great devotee of the Lord. Although a *daitya* by birth, like his other three brothers, he was completely free from demonical propensities. Even the gods who were the enemies of his race spoke in high terms of his noble traits and spiritual merits in their meetings. The deeds and glory of Sri Vishnu, Whom he saw everywhere and in Whose arms he left himself carried, filled his heart and mind from infancy, which alarmed his demon father, who thought it an unnatural "obsession" in a *daitya*.

The royal *Asura* quivered and barked:

"I see that you are destined to die now, O braggart! But I want you for just one second to think if there is a Lord in all the three worlds other than I. You seem to conceive a being who pervades everything. If so, he must surely be in this pillar. Let him show himself and protect you from my sword."

So saying, the King struck the pillar of the throne-room with his fist with great vehemence and drew his sword to cut off his son's head. But great was his dismay when from the rose the sound of a crash so terrific that it reached the seventh world of Brahma and brought down all the denizens of the spheres, who thought the hour of universal dissolution had struck. Out of the pillar, issued a mighty Being, who was neither man nor lion, but both man and lion - Narasimha - of an immense, magnificent stature, and stood in the middle of the room with eyes, face, hair and mane shedding an indescribable lustre all around. He had a number of arms, a short, thick neck, a broad chest, a tongue as sharp as the edge of a razor, tremendous teeth and claws. He was the Lord armed with their sharpest weapons, took fright and scattered like chaff before a hurricane. Hiranyakasipu lifted his mace to strike Him, but, forestalling him, Narasimha caught him as the hawk catches a snake and then let him go, as if in play. The *asura* then drew his sword to cut Him, but the Lord roared with a man's laughter and a lion's roar and seized him again, bent him on His thighs, tore his bowels and heart with His claws, and threw his carcass on the ground. He then turned His countless arms against his thousands of followers, who rushed at Him with their weapons, and despatched them all, and in one leap He sat on the dead King's throne. Showers of flowers fell on Him from the celestial hosts who had watched the fight. Brahma, Shiva, Indra, *siddhas* and Rishis, all the gods and goddesses with their retinue sang hymns of praise to the Supreme Narayana and there was universal rejoicing in heaven and on earth. Yet Lord Narasimha continued to quiver so much that neither Lord Shiva, Brahma, nor even Sree, his Beloved Consort Herself, dared to approach Him. Brahma thought it best to send to Him child Prahlada, who slowly approached, bowed low and prostrated full length on the ground before Him. The Lord out of the fullness of His love, placed His hand on his head and raised him to his feet. But the touch completely transformed the little devotee: it swept away all the inhibitions and the latent impressions

which he had carried from the past birth to the present and revealed to him the pure Being - the true nature of the Lord - which thrilled his heart and diffused joy to his whole frail body.

Book Ten
Lord Krishna I - II

Prologue

The curtain now rises on the most splendid and most colourful scenes of the *Bhagavata*.

Lord Narayana, resolving to descend to the earth in His full glory in the most potent (*purana*) *avatara* of Himself, is born in Mathura as the Lord Krishna from Devaki, preceded by hosts of celestials, who, likewise, took birth not only as humans - friends, relatives, *gopis* and ministers - but also as cows, deers, snakes, etc., to assist Him in His purifying mission and give Him on earth the comforts and delights which He enjoys in His celestial abode - Vaikuntha.

As the story unfolds and draws nearer to familiar scenes in his own life, the king Parikshit grows insistent on the fullest details possible to make him forget, he says, the tormenting fast, which he has vowed to carry out unto death, and ends with a eulogy of Sri Suka, saying: "Hunger and thirst no longer afflict me, O omniscient Sage, now that I am drinking the nectar which drops from your lips."

Rising to the occasion, the Sage answers:

"You have made, O Jewel of saintly kings, a right resolve, which has resulted in your hunger for the Lord's stories, which purify him that recites and him that listens to them, like the water which has been touched by His sacred feet."

XXXIII Rasa Dance

The *gopis* now realised the nature of Krishna's love, which, they knew, would never forsake them, and felt supremely happy. In the abandonment of joy, they proposed to dance the Rasa on the sandy bank of the Yamuna, which is a dance in which men and women form a circle, each man standing between two women encircling their necks with his arms and, as there were then no men other than Krishna, He multiplied Himself to the number of women and stood between them. The celestials, not wanting to miss this unique spectacle, came in their hundreds, with their musical instruments beating and their consorts decked with jewels and bursting with curiosity. The Rasa started in a medley of sounds, of celestial kettle drums, *gandharvas'* choral songs, and the jingling of the *gopi's* bangles, anklets and the thousands of bells which ring clapping and interlocking of hands, billowing breasts, loosened girdles and hair, fluttering garments, and voices trembling with love, the *gopis* shimmered like lightning flashes in a thick cloud, charmingly unconscious of their attitudes. As the excitement of the dance grew hotter, the *gopis* behaved strangely in their love frenzy. One pitched her voice to a piercing treble, which her Krishna applauded with a "Bravo!" Another clasped the shoulders of Krishna who was by her side, letting her bangles and jasmin crown slip off. A third held his arm, smelt its fresh-lily fragrance, and kissed it. A fourth *gopi* rubbed her cheek against His and received from his mouth the half chewed betel. A fifth

pressed His hand to her bosom, as if fatigued and needed a support.

The mad Rasa dance went on and on. The celestial women, smitten with jealousy for Krishna's amorous alliance with mere mortals, fainted in their aerial cars and the moon-god along with his twenty-seven wives (stellar houses), struck with wonder, forgot his journey in the sky, stopping the night's movement towards its end. By multiplying Himself, Krishna enjoyed the cumulative love of all the *gopis* simultaneously, though He is ever in the enjoyment of the bliss of His own self. With His own hands He wiped the drops of sweats from His companions' faces with the tenderness of a lover, which thrilled and maddened the damsels still more. Suffocated by their embraces and bedaubed with the saffron paint of their breasts, Krishna finally entered the river Yamuna, where He was sportfully pelted with a mass of water from all sides. Bath over, they all came out and started roaming with supreme ecstasy in the groves and woodlands of Brindavan in that endless night, which in effect, consisted of many nights.

King Parikshat, interrupting Suka, asked:

"We are taught that Lord Krishna took birth among men with the supreme purpose of promoting *dharma* and suppressing *adharma*. How could He transgress His own laws by taking so much liberty with other men's wives, He whose desires are all fulfilled? What could His intentions have been in perpetrating such repugnant acts?"

The Sage answered:

"Violating the principles of *dharma* by the Almighty carries no sin with it, Himself being the purifying agent, like the fire which cleanses all impurities. It is sinful and punishable in lesser beings. The poison, for example, which Shiva swallowed with impunity, would have been the death of any lesser person than Him. The intelligent man should shape his conduct according to the precepts enunciated and the rules laid down by the Great, and not according to their behaviour, which is not bound by any karmic law. The Lord appeared in a human body to shower His Grace on those who come in corporeal contact with Him, and create devotion in those who hear of the greatness of His deeds and life. As for the husbands of the *gopi's*, you must know that they never missed their wives, having by the powers of the Lord, had them all along by their sides.

When at long last shimmers of the dawn pierced the eastern sky, bringing the Rasa night to an end, the *gopis*, as commanded by Krishna, reluctantly tore themselves from Him and returned to their homes.

He who listens to this story with reverence, will be blessed with supreme devotion to the Lord and will acquire self-control and mastery* over lust.

** This should put an end to all doubts about Krishna's unexceptionable behaviour with the gopis, which has been the subject of much controversy by some who are apt to judge Him by the normal behaviour of householders. These chapters have left no doubt in the seekers' minds that this relationship was absolutely blameless, when even the gopis themselves acknowledged Krishna to be their "own eternal Self", and Krishna again and again reminded them (and us, incidentally), that "I do not outwardly answer love for love, so that the devotee may think of Me in his mind.*

⇦

Therefore, to establish in you constant devotion to Me in your mind I have made my body and my love invisible" (pp. 181-182). The people who criticise this scene most are the ones who rightly hold fast to the sanctity of conjugal rights, but miss the fact that these rights were not denied to the gopis' husbands, who by the Lord's own powers never missed their wives, whom they found all along by their sides. We have, moreover to remind them that the gopis and gopas were no ordinary mortals, but celestials who had taken special births for the Lord's purpose, for which they were rewarded by His bodily presence and contact, a privilege which was denied to them in their heavenly spheres.

Finally, Sri Suka's answer and this conclusion that the listener of this story will acquire "self-control and mastery over lust," should dissipate the last vestige of suspicion.

Book Eleven
Uddhava Gita

XXVIII Truth is One only

Recapitulating the teaching of the Absolute, Krishna affirms that considering the existence of only one substance - *Paramatman* or Supreme Self - manifesting as *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, the seeker must desist from praising or condemning the actions and dispositions of others, which will make him fall in the delusion of duality and thus defeat his own purpose of attaining the oneness of the Self. In the world of duality where everything is false, unreal like a mirage, an echo, a reflection, the discrimination between good and bad does not arise, although it somehow affects the *jivas*. The one substance in both the creator and the created, the protector and the protected, the destroyer and the destroyed. The *triputi* (triad of percipient, percept, and perception) is the product of illusion, and thus does not exist. The knower of this truth as taught by the Lord, neither extols nor reviles anyone, but goes about unattached like the sun.

Uddhava declares that only two principles are involved in the person who suffers transmigration, soul and body, neither of which is capable of rebirth. The latter, he argues, disintegrates at death, and stands no chance of revival; the former is deathless, and, therefore, likewise cannot be reborn. Yet births and deaths are real. Who is it, he asks Krishna, who undergoes them (if neither the body nor the soul is reborn)?

The Lord answers:

"*Notwithstanding the fact that the phenomena do not at all exist, yet so long as the contact between the unillumined jiva and the senses continues, transmigration does not cease*. So long as the dreamer continues to be deluded by the dream objects, he continues to suffer dream sorrow, although this does not exist (but as sensations in him), and ceases when he becomes enlightened on waking. Grief, fear, birth and death affect the deluded part of the dreamer, the ego, and not his being or Self. *True knowledge consists in distinguishing the Self, which is real, from the not-Self, which is unreal. By the means spoken of before and by the Grace of a perfect Master, this distinction is clearly perceived, and the body is completely rejected as the non-Self*. Just as space is not affected by the elements : fire,

water, earth, etc., of which it is the container, so is the imperishable, all-containing Being not affected by the *gunas*. *Efforts must be made to shun the not-Self until supreme bhakti cuts down rajas*, the active qualities which are responsible for the illusion. Just as the disease that has not been radically cured is likely to recur again and again and afflicts its sufferer, so does the mind that teems with libidinous and karmic propensities bring about the fall of him who has not attained perfection in yoga (full *Jnana*). Imperfect yogis who fall from the path due to relationship with a family, disciples, etc., will in a future life, resume their yogic efforts at the point of interruption of their present endeavours, but will never take again to action. The unregenerate perform action till the last moment of their life, and are paid back in transient pleasure and pain, but the regenerate, though seated in a body remain actionless, their thirst for enjoyment having been slaked by the bliss of Self-realisation. Being permanently established in the Self, they take no heed of the actions of the body, nor do they take for real the objects that fall within the ranges of their perception, no more than an awakened man concedes reality to the objects he has perceived in a dream. The body which has so far been identified with one's own Self, dear Uddhava, and which is actually the product of the *gunas* and *karma*, now completely disappears in the light of Self-knowledge : not so the Self which can be neither perceived nor rejected (for the repudiator would still be the sentient Self itself, which remains as the absolute residuum). Just as the light of the sun dispels the darkness from the eye and reveals what has already been present but unseen, so does the realisation of Me dispel the darkness of the mind and reveal the Self, which has all along been invisibly present as the source of all experiences, the senses and speech, and which is self-luminous, beyond the reach of reason, words, births, time and space. The notion of differences in the absolute Self is entirely a delusion, for none exists other than itself. *The claim of an irrefutable duality made by some arrogant dualists is utterly senseless*.

"There are those who practise sense-control and manage to keep the body strong and youthful and take to the practice of yoga with the view of acquiring *siddhis*. The wise look askance at them and at *their futile endeavour to preserve a body which is as perishable as a fruit on a tree*.

XXIX
Farewell Message to Uddhava

Uddhava submits that the yoga of concentration is extremely difficult to practise, so that many strivers feel disheartened and frustrated when they fail to curb their mental restlessness to attain peace. He asks if there is an alternative to it.

The Lord advises the surrender of the fruits of action to Him and the maintaining of a ceaseless thought of Him. Other helps are : dwelling in holy environments and in the company of saints, arranging processions and meetings to propound His glory, habituating oneself to see Him, the Perfect, within and without oneself and all creatures, like the all-pervading ether. The person who treats all alike and honours and respects them all, as he does the Lord Himself, Krishna avers, is free from hatred, envy, malice, and self-conceit. Believing the Lord to be in all beings, he should prostrate before even a dog, a pariah, a cow, or a donkey until the conviction that all these are actually Himself takes a firm hold of him, taking no notice of the carping, and forgetting the body and the sense of shame and humiliation. This habit of looking upon all beings as the Lord Himself in thought, deed and word, is the best of all disciplines. *No effort, however small, made in His worship is wasted, for it is free*

from desire and unaffected by the *gunas*. Any work surrendered to Him is righteous, even so insignificant an act as crying or running away in fear or grief.

The Lord concludes:

"The foregoing exposition covers the entire range of Vedantic thought, which I have again and again been propounding as clearly as has been possible. He who comprehends it fully will have all his doubts dispelled, and himself will be in a fair way close to the realisation of the transcendent Brahman. Of My own accord I will reveal Myself to the teacher who will widely preach it; and he who will daily recite it to purify others, will himself be purified. Likewise, he who will daily listen to it with reverence will be considered as practising supreme devotion to Me, and will not be bound to perform action.

"You should not, friend Uddhava, impart this teaching of Mine to a hypocrite, an unbeliever, a scamp, or one who is given to wicked ways, or is not My devotee, but to one who is free from these faults, pious, and has a genuine devotion to Me, be he a Sudra or a woman. *Having known this there remains nothing more for one to know, nothing more to enjoy. To him who has drunk the sweet nectar of immortality, no other drink tastes well*. I am to you, dear Uddhava, all the good that can be derived from knowledge, from the practice of *dharma*, from Yoga, from business undertakings and from regal powers. Relinquishing all duties in your dedication to Myself, you will enjoy My special favour and will attain immortality in Me."

Book Twelve
Epilogue

I - II Kali Makes Its Bow

The evil forces of the age will henceforth gather strength until the *Kali* spirit will be in its full stride, when righteousness, truthfulness, purity, benevolence, physical and mental vigour will reach their lowest water marks. Wealth alone will then count against lineage, morality and personal merits; and might will replace right. Marital ties will be formed solely on the expectation of the maximum sexual delight, in disregard of personal virtues. Cheating will be the mainspring of business, and the Brahmins' only qualification will be the wearing of the sacred thread. Justice will be perverted and administered according to the size of the bribe received. Poverty will be adjudged as the test of impiety, and hypocrisy of goodness. Good deeds will be done for the sake of publicity and the materially strongest among the castes will rule the others. This is the darkest age which will torment the people with endless worries and a short span of life: thirty years will be the maximum age men can reach; thirty years of thirst and hunger, of stunted growth in mind and body, of heresy, loss of caste and of memory. Men will worship their wives and their wives' relatives, abandoning father, mother, sister and brother. Clouds will carry thunders and lightening but no rain. When the age will pass its nadir and its worst forces will have well-nigh spent themselves, the Lord will appear among the mortals in His *sattvic* form as a Kalki in house of Vishnuvasha, a noble Brahmin, in Shambala village. Riding His celestial horse Devadutta, He will exterminate robbers who bear royal names by the million, and will restore moral sense in the people till town and countryside will again enjoy peace and security. Then a new

cycle of *yugas* will begin with *Satya* (the golden age) as its head, whose human generations will be imbued with great intellectual, moral and physical strength, possessing all *sattvic* qualities.

How to Escape the Kali Spirit

As for attaining the Supreme in the *Kali* age, Sage Suka asserts that the method is easier than in the other three *yugas* because of the strong opposition offered to the efforts for it by the evil forces of the age. While in *Satyayuga* Emancipation is attainable through intense concentration on Lord Vishnu, in *Treta* through sacrifice, in *Dwapara* through rituals, in *Kali* merely chanting His Name and singing His praise bring about detachment and Liberation.

XII - XIII The Glory of the Bhagavata Purana

The *Suta* gives a brief synopsis of the foregoing eleven *skandas* (books) and affirms that he who studies them with reverence and understanding will derive the same benefit as he would from the study of the *Rigveda, Yajurveda*, and *Samaveda*, which are the three steams flowing with honey, *ghee* and milk, put together. This *Purana* which is the quintessence of the Upanishads and which consists of eighteen thousand *slokas*, was revealed by the gracious Lord to Brahma. It is profusely illuminated with legends illustrating the Lord's plays and the glory to dispassion. Its theme is the one, secondless Reality which is the essence of the Vedanta and identical with the individual soul, and has Kaivalya (the attainment of this lone Reality) for sole object. He who develops a taste for it will relish nothing else. It occupies among the *Puranas* the place which the Ganges occupies among the sacred rivers, or Vishnu among the gods, or Kashi among the holy places of pilgrimage. It is faultless in its exaltation of the One Immaculate Consciousness, which is the goal of the Paramahamsas (the highest ascetics), and in its exposition of the cessation of all actions and self-dedication to dispassion, devotion, and spiritual enlightenment (*vairagya, bhakti* and *jnana*).

Let us contemplate the pure, perfect, eternal, absolute Reality which was graciously revealed by Lord Narayana in the beginning of creation to Brahma, and by Brahma to Narada, and by Narada to Vyasa, who imparted it to his son Suka, who imparted it to King Parikshit and redeemed him from the misery of transmigration.

Salutations to Sri Hari, the Dispeller of all fear, the chanting of Whose Name washes away all sins and puts and end to all suffering!

Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Three Volumes in One

By
Munagala Venkatramiah

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Note by the Recorder

In a very critical and distressing period of his life, an humble devotee sought the Presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, for his own peace of mind, and lived in the Asramam with the kind permission of the *Sarvadhikari*, Sri Niranjanananda Swami. The seeker took it upon himself to note down, as occasions arose, the sweet, refreshing and enlightening words of the Master. This self-imposed task was undertaken for the purification of his own mind and better understanding of the subtle and profound words of Sri Bhagavan. Shortly after, the *Sarvadhikari* officially took them over to the Asramam. These notes covering the period 1935-39 are included in the present volumes with the hope that some readers may find them interesting and helpful in their spiritual quest.

Sri Ramanasramam,
1st January, 1955.
Recorder

Foreword

"This is not a book to be lightly read and laid aside; it is bound to prove to be an unfailing guide to increasing numbers of pilgrims to the Light Ever-lasting. Despite the fact that the great Sage of Arunachala taught for the most part through silence, he did instruct through speech also, and that too, lucidly, without baffling and beclouding the minds of his listeners. One would wish that every word that he uttered had been preserved for posterity. But we have to be thankful for what little of the utterances had been put on record. Sri Ramana's central teaching is: Self-inquiry. Instead of wanting to know this and that, seek to know the Self. Ask 'Who am I?', instead of asking about a hundred other things. Self-inquiry ought to be the easiest of all tasks. But it seems to be the most difficult because we have become strangers to our Self. What one has to do is simple-to abide as the Self. This is the ultimate Truth. This is one's eternal, natural, inherent state. Sri Ramana's teachings as found in the 'Talks' will bring hope to every one. No one need think that he is beyond the pale of redemption.''

University of Madras
August 11th, 1958
Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan

Introduction

"Sri Bhagavan always stressed the one essential truth that was necessary for Liberation, that there is only one Self and nothing but the Self. Know that and everything else is known. This cannot be repeated too often. You are the Self, he tell us, nothing but the Self, anything else is just imagination, so BE the Self here and now. There is no need to run off to a forest or shut oneself in room; carry on with your essential activities but free yourself from association with the doer of them. Self is the witness, you are That.

Example after example is given in these talks, in language to suit all tastes and mentalities. The reading of the book automatically drives one inward to the source. It is itself a sufficient *Sadhana*. Do not delude yourself, you are already That, there is nothing more to be obtained, only false association to be shed, limitation to be recognised as illusory.

What more is there to say, but to advise one and all to read this book and try to make it a part of themselves? Not one word to be passed over lightly, or one conversation to be dismissed as superfluous.''

Sri Ramanasramam,
1st January, 1955.
Sadhu Arunachala
Major A. W. Chadwick, O.B.E.

⇦

9th November, 1935

93. All are aware of their own Self only. Wonder of wonders! They take what is not as what is, or they see the phenomena apart from the Self. Only so long as there is the knower is there knowledge of all kinds (direct, inferential, intellectual etc.); should the knower vanish they all vanish together with him; their validity is of the same degree as his.

6th January, 1935

12. A man asked the Maharshi to say something to him. When asked what he wanted to know, he said that he knew nothing and wanted to hear something from the Maharshi.

M.: You know that you know nothing. Find out that knowledge. That is liberation (*mukti*).

22nd September, 1936

41. *D.:* What is that one thing, knowing which all doubts are solved?

M.: Know the doubter. If the doubter is held, the doubts will not arise. Here the doubter is transcendent. Again when the doubter ceases to exist, there will be no doubts arising. From where will they arise? All are *jnanis, jivanmuktas*. Only they are not aware of the fact. Doubts must be uprooted. This means that the doubter must be uprooted. Here the doubter is the mind.

D.: What is the method?

M.: 'Who am I? is the investigation.

D.: May we perform japa?

M.: Why should you think I am this? Investigate and the thoughts cease. What is, namely the Self, will be revealed as the inescapable residue.

D.: Is *hatha yoga* necessary?

M.: It is one of the aids — not that it is always necessary. It depends upon the person. *Vichara* surpasses *pranayama*. In *Yoga Vasistha* Chudala advises investigation (*vichara*) to Sikhidvaja for killing the ego.

Reality can be reached by holding on to *prana* or intellect. *Hatha yoga* is the former; *Vichara* is the latter.

D.: Is there any individuality for the *Jnani* after Realisation?

M.: How can he retain individuality?

Even ordinarily the elders advise *achamana* and *pranamaya* before undertaking any work — be it worldly or other-worldly. That means, concentration of mind accomplishes the work.

D.: I meditate *neti-neti* (not this - not this).

M.: No-that is not meditation. Find the source. You must reach the source without fail. The false 'I' will disappear and the real 'I' will be realised. The former cannot exist apart from the latter.

28th March, 1935

43. Mr. Raghaviah: How shall we co-relate the higher experience with the lower experience (meaning spiritual experience with mundane affairs)?

M.: There is only one experience. What are the worldly experiences but those built up on the false 'I'? Ask the most successful man of the world if he knows his Self. He will say "No". What can any one know without knowing the Self? All worldly knowledge is built upon such a flimsy foundation.

Mr. Ramamurthi: How to know the 'Real I' as distinct from the 'false I'.

M.: Is there any one who is not aware of himself? Each one knows, but yet does not know, the Self. A strange paradox.

The Master added later, "If the enquiry is made whether mind exists, it will be found that mind does not exist. That is control of mind. Otherwise, if the mind is taken to exist and one seeks to control it, it amounts to mind controlling the mind, just like a thief turning out to be a policeman to catch the thief. i.e., himself. Mind persists in that way alone, but eludes itself."

9th June 1936

197. Gul and Shirin Byramjee, two Parsi ladies of Ahmedabad, arrived this day. They spoke at night to Maharshi: "Bhagavan! We have been spiritually inclined from our childhood. We have read several books on philosophy and are attracted by Vedanta. So we read the Upanishads, *Yoga Vasishta, Bhagavad Gita* etc. We try to meditate, but there is no progress in our meditation. We do not understand how to realise. Can you kindly help us towards realisation?"

M.: How do you meditate?

D.: I begin to ask myself "Who am I?", eliminate body as not 'I', the breath as not 'I', the mind as not 'I' and I am not able to proceed further.

M.: Well, that is so far as the intellect goes. Your process is only intellectual. Indeed, all the scriptures mention the process only to guide the seeker to know the Truth. The Truth cannot be directly pointed out. Hence this intellectual process. You see, the one who eliminates all the not I cannot eliminate the 'I'. To say 'I am not this' or 'I am that' there must be the 'I'. This 'I' is only the ego or the 'I'-thought.

After the rising up of this ‘I’-thought all other thoughts arise. The ‘I’-thought is therefore the root-thought. If the root is pulled out all others are at the same time uprooted. Therefore seek the root ‘I’, question yourself “Who am I?”; find out its source. Then all these will vanish and the pure Self will remain ever.

D.: How to do it?

M.: The ‘I’ is always there - in deep sleep, in dream and in wakefulness. The one in sleep is the same as that who now speaks. There is always the feeling of ‘I’. Otherwise do you deny your existence? You do not. You say ‘I am’. Find out who is.

D.: Even so, I do not understand. ‘I’, you say, is the wrong ‘I’ now. How to eliminate this wrong ‘I’?

M.: You need not eliminate the wrong ‘I’. How can ‘I’ eliminate itself? - All that you need do is to find out its origin and abide there. Your efforts can extend only thus far. Then the Beyond will take care of itself. You are helpless there. No effort can reach it.

D.: If ‘I’ am always-here and now, why do I not feel so?

M.: That is it. Why says it is not felt? Does the real ‘I’ say it or the false ‘I’? Examine it. You will find it as the wrong ‘I’. The wrong ‘I’ is the obstruction. It has to be removed in order that the true ‘I’ may not be hidden. The feeling that I have not realised is the obstruction to realisation. In fact it is already realised; there is nothing more to be realised. Otherwise, the realisation will be new; it has not existed so far, it must take place hereafter. What is born will also die. If realisation be not eternal it is not worth having. Therefore what we seek is not that which must happen afresh. It is only that which is eternal but not now known due to obstructions; it is that we seek. All that we need do is to remove the obstruction. That which is eternal is not known to be so because of ignorance. Ignorance is the obstruction. Get over this ignorance and all will be well.

The ignorance is identical with the ‘I-thought’. Find its source and it will vanish. The ‘I’-thought is like a spirit which, although not palpable, rises up automatically with the body, flourishes and disappears with it. The body-consciousness is the wrong ‘I’. Give up this body-consciousness. It is done by seeking the source ‘I’. The body does not say ‘I am’. It is you who say, ‘I am the body!’ Find out who this ‘I’ is. Seeking its source it will vanish.

D.: Then, will there be bliss?

M.: Bliss is coeval with Being-Consciousness. All the arguments relating to the eternal Being of that Bliss apply to Bliss also. Your nature is Bliss. Ignorance is not hiding that Bliss. Remove the ignorance for Bliss to be freed.

D.: Should we not find out the ultimate reality of the world, individual and God?

M.: These are all conceptions of the ‘I’. They arise only after the advent of the ‘I’-thought. Did you

think of them in your deep sleep? You existed in deep sleep and the same you are now speaking. If they be real should they not be in your sleep also? They are only dependent upon the 'I'-thought. Again does the world tell you 'I am the world'? Does the body say 'I am body'? You say, "This is the world", "this is body" and so on. So these are only your conceptions. Find out who you are and there will be an end of all your doubts.

D.: What becomes of the body after realisation? Does it exist or not? We see realised beings acting like others.

M.: This question need not arise now. Let it be asked after realisation, if need be. As for the realised beings let them take care of themselves. Why do you worry about them? In fact, after realisation the body and all else will not appear different from the Self.

D.: Being always Being-Consciousness-Bliss, why does God place us in difficulties? Why did He create us?

M.: Does God come and tell you that He has placed you in difficulties? It is you who say so. It is again the wrong 'I'. If that disappears there will be no one to say that God created this or that. That which is does not even say 'I am'. For, does any doubt rise 'I am not'? Only in such a case should one be reminding oneself 'I am a man'. One does not. On the other hand, if a doubt arises whether he is a cow or a buffalo he has to remind himself that he is not a cow, etc., but 'I am a man'. This would never happen. Similarly with one's own existence and realisation.

23rd January, 1937

347. The mind is a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts arise because there is the thinker. The thinker is the ego. The ego, if sought, will automatically vanish. The ego and the mind are the same. The ego is the root-thought from which all other thoughts arise.

24th January, 1939

615. Another from the group asked: How is the ego to be destroyed?

M.: Hold the ego first and then ask how it is to be destroyed. Who asks this question? It is the ego. Can the ego ever agree to kill itself? This question is a sure way to cherish the ego and not to kill it. If you seek the ego you will find it does not exist. That is the way to destroy it.

In this connection I am often reminded of a funny incident which took place when I was living in the West Chitrai Street in Madura. A neighbour in an adjoining house anticipated the visit of a thief to his house. He took precautions to catch him. He posted policemen in mufti to guard the two ends of the lane, the entrance and the back-door to his own house. The thief came as expected and the men rushed to catch him. He took in the situation at a glance and shouted "Hold him, hold him. There-he runs-there-there." Saying so he made good his escape.

So it is with the ego. Look for it and it will not be found. That is the way to get rid of it.

20th June, 1936

213. Mr. B. C. Das asked why the mind cannot be turned inward in spite of repeated attempts.

M.: It is done by practice and dispassion and that succeeds only gradually. The mind, having been so long a cow accustomed to graze stealthily on others' estates, is not easily confined to her stall. However much her keeper tempts her with luscious grass and fine fodder, she refuses the first time; then she takes a bit; but her innate tendency to stray away asserts itself; and she slips away; on being repeatedly tempted by the owner, she accustoms herself to the stall; finally even if let loose she would not stray away. Similarly with the mind. If once it finds its inner happiness it will not wander outward.

15th October, 1938

551. A man asked Sri Bhagavan; "How is it that *Atma vidya* is said to be the easiest?"

M.: Any other *vidya* requires a knower, knowledge and the object to be known, whereas this does not require any of them. It is the Self. Can anything be so obvious as that? Hence it is the easiest. All that you need do is to enquire, "Who am I?"

A man's true name is *mukti* (liberation).

1st February, 1939

620. *D.:* "Not this - not this". That is the teaching to the seeker. He is told that the Self is Supreme. How is it to be found?
M.: The Self is said to be the hearer, thinker, knower, etc. But this is not all. It is also described as the ear of ear, the mind of the mind, etc.; and by what means to know the knower?

D.: But this does not say what the Self is.

M.: "Not this — not this"

D.: It only negates.

M.: (Silence).

The devotee complains that the Self is not pointed out.

6th January, 1936

130. Lakshman Brahmachari from Sri Ramakrishna Mission asked: Enquiry of 'Who am I?' or of the 'I'-thought being itself a thought, how can it be destroyed in the process?

M.: When Sita was asked who was her husband among the *rishis* (Rama himself being present there as a rishi) in the forest by the wives of the *rishis*, she denied each one as he was pointed out to her, but

simply hung down her head when Rama was pointed out. Her silence was eloquent.

Similarly, the Vedas also are eloquent in '*neti*' - '*neti*' (not this-not this) and then remain silent. Their silence is the Real state. This is the meaning of exposition of silence. When the source of the 'I'-thought is reached it vanishes and what remains over is the Self.

D.: Patanjali Yoga Sutras speak of identification.

M.: Identification with the Supreme is the only the other name for the destruction of the ego.

3rd January, 1937

Drops of Nectar

314. In yesterday's answers, Sri Bhagavan said that the Self is pure consciousness in deep slumber, and He also indicated the Self of the transition from sleep to the waking state as the ideal for realisation. He was requested to explain the same.

Sri Bhagavan graciously answered: The Self is pure consciousness in sleep; it evolves as *aham* ('I') without the *idam* ('this') in the transition stage; and manifests as *aham* ('I') and *idam* ('this') in the waking state. The individual's experience is by means of *aham* ('I') only. So he must aim at realisation in the way indicated (*i.e.*, by means of the transitional 'I'). Otherwise the sleep-experience does not matter to him. If the transitional 'I' be realised the substratum is found and that leads to the goal.

Again, sleep is said to be *ajnana* (ignorance). That is only in relation to the wrong *jnana* (knowledge) prevalent in the wakeful state. The waking state is really *ajnana* (ignorance) and the sleep state is *prajnana* (full knowledge). *Prajnana* is Brahman, says the *sruti*. Brahman is eternal. The sleep-experiencer is called *prajna*. He is *prajnanam* in all the three states. Its particular significance in the sleep state is that He is full of knowledge (*prajnanaghana*). What is *ghana*? There are *jnana* and *vijnana*. Both together operate in all perceptions. *Vijnana* in the *jagrat* is *viparita jnana* (wrong knowledge) *i.e., ajnana* (ignorance). It always co-exists with the individual. When this becomes *vispashta jnana* (clear knowledge), It is Brahman. When wrong knowledge is totally absent, as in sleep, He remains pure *prajnana* only. That is *Prajnanaghana*. *Aitareya Upanishad* says *prajnana, vijnana, ajnana, samjnana* are all names of Brahman. Being made up of knowledge alone how is He to be experienced? Experience is always with *vijnana*. Therefore the pure 'I' of the transitional stage must be help for the experience of the *Prajnanaghana*. The 'I' of the waking state is impure and is not useful for such experience. Hence the use of the transitional 'I' or the pure 'I'. How is this pure 'I' to be realised? *Viveka Chudamani* says, *Vijnana kose vilasatyajasram* (He is always shining forth in the intellectual sheath, *vijnana kosa*). *Tripura Rahasya* and other works point out that the interval between two consecutive *sankalpas* (ideas or thoughts) represent the pure *aham* ('I'). Therefore holding on to the pure 'I', one should have the *Prajnanaghana* for aim, and there is the *vritti* present in the attempt. All these have their proper and respective places and at the same time lead to realisation.

Again the pure Self has been described in *Viveka Chudamani* to be beyond *asat*, *i.e.*, different from *asat*. Here *asat* is the contaminated waking 'I'. *Asadvilakshana* means *sat*, *i.e.*, the Self of sleep. He

is also described as different from *sat* and *asat*. Both mean the same. He is also *asesha sakshi* (all-seeing witness).

If pure, how is He to be experienced by means of the impure 'I'? A man says "I slept happily". Happiness was his experience. If not, how could he speak of what he had not experienced? How did he experience happiness in sleep, if the Self was pure? Who is it that speaks of that experience now? The speaker is the *vijnanatma* (ignorant self) and he speaks of *prajnanatma* (pure self). How can that hold? Was this *vijnanatma* present in sleep? His present statement of the experience of happiness in sleep makes one infer his existence in sleep. How then did he remain? Surely not as in the waking state. He was there very subtle. Exceedingly subtle *vijnanatma* experiences the happy *prajnanatma* by means of *maya* mode. It is like the rays of the moon seen below the branches, twigs and leaves of a tree.

The subtle *vijnanatma* seems apparently a stranger to the obvious *vijnanatma* of the present moment. Why should we infer his existence in sleep? Should we not deny the experience of happiness and be done with this inference? No. The fact of the experience of happiness cannot be denied, for everyone courts sleep and prepares a nice bed for the enjoyment of sound sleep.

This brings us to the conclusion that the cogniser, cognition and the cognised are present in all the three states, though there are differences in their subtleties. In the transitional state, the *aham* ('I') is *suddha* (pure), because *idam* ('this') is suppressed. *Aham* ('I') predominates.

'Why is not that pure 'I' realised now or even remembered by us? Because of want of acquaintance (*parichaya*) with it. It can be recognised only if it is consciously attained. Therefore make the effort and gain consciously.

7th November, 1935

92. A visitor said: Some say that one should practice meditation on gross objects only: it may be disastrous if one constantly seeks to kill the mind.

M.: For whom is it disastrous? Can there be disaster apart from the Self?

Unbroken 'I - I' is the ocean infinite; the ego, 'I' - thought, remains only a bubble on it and is called *jiva*, *i.e.*, individual soul. The bubble too is water; when it bursts it only mixes in the ocean. When it remains a bubble it is still a part of the ocean. Ignorant of this simple truth, innumerable methods under different denominations, such as yoga, *bhakti, karma*.... each again with many modifications, are being taught with great skill and in intricate detail only to entice the seekers and confuse their minds. So also are the religions and sects and dogmas. What are they all for? Only for knowing the Self. They are aids and practices required for knowing the Self.

Objects perceived by the senses are spoken of as immediate knowledge (*pratyaksha*). Can anything be as direct as the Self - always experienced without the aid of the senses? Sense-perceptions can only be indirect knowledge, and not direct knowledge. Only one's own awareness is direct knowledge, as is the common experience of one and all. No aids are needed to know one's own Self, i.e., to be aware.

The one Infinite Unbroken Whole (plenum) becomes aware of itself as 'I'. This is its original name. All other names, e.g., OM, are later growths. Liberation is only to remain aware of the Self. The *mahavakya* "I am Brahman" is its authority. Though the 'I' is always experienced, yet one's attention has to be drawn to it. Then only knowledge dawns. Thus the need for the instruction of the Upanishads and of wise sages.

18th June, 1936

205. Mr. Cohen had been cogitating on the nature of the Heart, if the 'spiritual heart' beats; if so, how; if it does not beat, then how is it to be felt?

M.: This heart is different from the physical heart; beating is the function of the latter. The former is the seat of spiritual experience. That is all that can be said of it.

Just as a dynamo supplies motive power to whole systems of lights, fans, etc, so the original Primal Force supplies energy to the beating of the heart, respiration, etc.

D.: How is the 'I' - 'I' consciousness felt?

M.: As an unbroken awareness of 'I'. It is simply consciousness.

D.: Can we know it when it dawns?

M.: Yes, as consciousness. You are that even now. There will be no mistaking it when it is pure.

D.: Why do we have such a place as the 'Heart' for meditation?

M.: Because you seek consciousness. Where can you find it? Can you reach it externally? You have to find it internally. Therefore you are directed inward. Again the 'Heart' is only the seat of consciousness or the consciousness itself.

D.: On what should we meditate?

M.: Who is the meditator? Ask the question first. Remain as the meditator. There is no need to meditate.

11th March, 1936

180. Later, the same gentleman said that sleep was a state of oblivion and the wakeful state was the mind's activity. The mind was in a potential state in sleep.

M.: Were you not in sleep?

D.: Yes, I was. But in a state of oblivion. There must be a witness of oblivion and of the mind which

says that 'I' am continuous in both states.

M.: Who is this witness? You speak of 'witness'. There must be an object and a subject to witness. These are creations of the mind. The idea of witness is in the mind. If there was the witness of oblivion did he say, 'I witness oblivion'? You, with your mind, said just now that there must be a witness. Who was the witness? You must reply 'I'. Who is that 'I' again? You are identifying yourself with the ego and say 'I'. Is this ego 'I', the witness? It is the mind that speaks. It cannot be witness of itself. With self-imposed limitations you think that there is a witness of mind and of oblivion. You also say, "I am the witness". That one who witnesses the oblivion must say, "I witness oblivion". The present mind cannot arrogate to itself that position.

The whole position becomes thus untenable. Consciousness is unlimited. On becoming limited it simply arrogates to itself the position. There is really nothing to witness. IT is simple BEING.

15th January, 1936

137. Lakshman Brahmachari of Sri Ramakrishna Mission asked: "Can one imagine oneself as witness of the thoughts?"

M.: It is not the natural state. It is only an idea (bhavana) - an aid to stilling the mind. The Self is ever the witness, whether so imagined or not. There is no need to so imagine except for that purpose. But it is best to remain as one's Self.

23rd January, 1937

348. *D.:* There are times when persons and things take on a vague, almost transparent, form as in a dream. One ceases to observe them as from outside, but is passively conscious of their existence, while not actively conscious of any kind of selfhood. There is a deep quietness in the mind. Is it, at such times, ready to dive into the Self? Or is this condition unhealthy, the result of self-hypnotism? Should it be encouraged as a means of getting temporary peace.

M.: There is consciousness along with quietness in the mind; this is exactly the state to be aimed at. The fact that the question has been framed on this point, without realising that it is the Self, shows that the state is not steady but casual.

The word 'diving' is appropriate to the state of outgoing tendencies when the mind is to be diverted and turned within, so as to dive below the surface of externalities. But when deep quietness prevails without obstructing the consciousness, where is the need to dive? If the state be not realised as the Self, the effort to do so may be called 'diving'. The state may in that way be said to be suitable for realisation or 'diving'. Thus the last two questions in the paragraph are unnecessary.

5th February, 1936

155. The same man again asked about the nature of *samadhi* and the means to get *samadhi*.

M.: When the one who asks the nature of *samadhi* and the method of getting into it vanishes, *samadhi* will result.

Maj. Chadwick: It is said that one look of a Mahatma is enough; that idols, pilgrimages, etc, are not so effective. I have been here for three months, but I do not know how I have been benefited by the look of Maharshi.

M.: The look has a purifying effect. Purification cannot be visualized. Just as a piece of coal takes long to be ignited, a piece of charcoal takes a short time, and a mass of gunpowder is instantaneously ignited, so it is with grades of men coming in contact with Mahatmas.

Mr. Cohen: I get into meditation and reach a point which may be called peace and a contemplative mood. What should be the next step?

M.: Peace is Self-Realisation. Peace need not be disturbed. One should aim at Peace only.

D.: But I do not have the satisfaction.

M.: Because your peace is temporary. If made permanent it is called Realisation.

27th December, 1936

307. Mr. Shamanna from Mysore asked Sri Bhagavan: Kindly explain *Aham Sphurana* (the light of 'I-I').

M.: 'I' is not known in sleep. On waking 'I' is perceived associated with the body, the world and the non-self in general. Such associated 'I' is *aham vritti*. When *Aham* represents the Self only it is *Aham Sphurana*. This is natural to the *Jnani* and is itself called *Jnana* by *Jnanis*, or *bhakti* by *bhaktas*. Though ever present, including in sleep, it is not perceived. It cannot be known in sleep all at once. It must first be realised in the waking state, for it is our true nature underlying all the three states. Efforts must be made only in the *jagrat* state and the Self realised here and now. It will afterwards be understood and realised to be continuous Self, uninterrupted by *jagrat, svapna* and *sushupti*.

Thus it is *akhandakara vritti* (unbroken experience). *Vritti* is used for lack of a better expression. It should not be understood to be literally a *vritti*. In that case, *vritti* will resemble an 'ocean-like river', which is absurd. *Vritti* is of short duration; it is qualified, directed consciousness; or absolute consciousness broken up by cognition of thoughts, senses, etc. *Vritti* is the function of the mind, whereas the continuous consciousness transcends the mind. This is the natural, primal state of the *jnani* or the liberated being. That is unbroken experience. It asserts itself when relative consciousness subsides. *Aham vritti* ('I-thought') is broken, *Aham sphurana* (the light of 'I-I') is unbroken, continuous. After the thoughts subside, the light shines forth.

6th July, 1935

62. Mr. Ekanatha Rao: What is *sphurana* (a kind of indescribable but palpable sensation in the Heart Centre)?

M.: Sphurana is felt on several occasions, such as in fear, excitement, etc. Although it is always and

all over, yet it is felt at a particular centre and on particular occasions. It is also associated with antecedent causes and confounded with the body. Whereas, it is all alone and pure; it is the Self. If the mind be fixed on the *sphurana* and one senses it continuously and automatically it is liberation.

Again *sphurana* is the foretaste of Realisation. It is pure. The subject and object proceed from it. If the man mistakes himself for the subject, objects must necessarily appear different for him. They are periodically withdrawn and projected, creating the world and the subject's enjoyment of the same. If, on the other hand, the man feels himself to be the screen on which the subject and object are projected there can be no confusion, and he can remain watching their appearance and disappearance without any perturbation to the Self.

4th February, 1939

624. A devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: With every thought the subject and the object appear and disappear. Does not the 'I' disappear when the subject disappears thus? If that be so how can the quest of the 'I' proceed?

M.: The subject (knower) is only a mode of mind. Though the mode (*vritti*) passes, the reality behind it does not cease. The background of the mode is the 'I' in which the mind modes arise and sink.

D:. After describing the Self as *srota* (hearer) *manta* (thinker), *vijnata* (knower), etc., it is again described as *asrata, amanta, avijnata*, non-hearer, non-thinker, non-knower. Is it so?

M.: Just so. The common man is aware of himself only when modifications arise in the intellect (*vijnanamaya kosa*); these modifications are transient; they arise and set. Hence the *vijnanamaya* (intellect) is called a *kosa* or sheath. When pure awareness is left over it is itself the Chit (Self) or the Supreme. To be in one's natural state on the subsidence of thoughts is bliss; if that bliss be transient - arising and setting - then it is only the sheath of bliss (*Anandamaya kosa*), not the pure Self. What is needed is to fix the attention on the pure 'I' after the subsidence of all thoughts and not to lose hold of it. This has to be described as an extremely subtle thought; else it cannot be spoken of at all, since it is no other than the Real Self. Who is to speak of it, to whom and how?

This is well explained in the *Kaivalyam* and the *Viveka Chudamani*. Thus though in sleep the awareness of the Self is not lost the ignorance of the *jiva* is not affected by it. For this ignorance to be destroyed this subtle state of mind (*vrittijnanam*) is necessary; in the sunshine cotton does not burn; but if the cotton be placed under a lens it catches fire and is consumed by the rays of the Sun passing through the lens. So too, though the awareness of the Self is present at all times, it is not inimical to ignorance. If by meditation the subtle state of thought is won, then ignorance is destroyed. Also in *Viveka Chudamani*: *ativa sukshmam paramatma tattvam na sthoola drishtya* (the exceedingly subtle Supreme Self cannot be seen by the gross eye) and *esha svayam jyotirasesha sakshi* (this is Self-shining and witnesses all).

This subtle mental state is not a modification of mind called *vritti*. Because the mental states are of two kinds. One is the natural state and the other is the transformation into forms of objects. The first

is the truth, and the other is according to the doer (*kartrutantra*). When the latter perishes, *jale kataka renuvat* (like the clearing nut paste in water) the former will remain over.

The means for this end is meditation. Though this is with the triad of distinction (*tripuri*) it will finally end in pure awareness (*jnanam*). Meditation needs effort; *jnanam* is effortless. Meditation can be done, or not done, or wrongly done, *jnanam* is not so. Meditation is described as *kartru-tantra* (as doer's own), *jnanam* as *vastu-tantra* (the Supreme's own).

25th December, 1935

118. Mr. Rangachari, a Telugu Pandit in Voorhees' College at Vellore, asked about *nishkama karma*. There was no reply. After a time Sri Bhagavan went up the hill and a few followed him, including the *pandit*. There was a thorny stick lying on the way which Sri Bhagavan picked up; he sat down and began leisurely to work at it. The thorns were cut off, the knots were made smooth, the whole stick made of a spiky material. A shepherd boy put in his appearance on the way as the group moved off. He had lost his stick and was at a loss. Sri Bhagavan immediately gave the new one in his hand to the boy and passed on.

The pandit said that this was the matter-of-fact answer to his question.

15th October, 1938

535. Once 'A' asked: How can one be worshipful while engaged in daily work?

Sri Bhagavan did not reply. Ten minutes passed. A few girls came for *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan. They began to sing and dance. Their song was to the effect: "We will churn the milk without losing thought of Krishna."

Sri Bhagavan turned to the Swami and said that there was the reply to his question. This state is called *Bhakti*, *Yoga* and *Karma*.

22nd March, 1939

650. An Andhra gentleman of middle age asked Sri Bhagavan how he should make his *japa*.

M.: The *japa* contains the word *namah*. It means that state in which the mind does not manifest apart from the Self. When the state is accomplished there will be an end of the *japa*. For the doer disappears and so also the action. The Eternal Being is alone left. *Japa* should be made until that state is reached. There is no escape from the Self. The doer will be automatically drawn into it. When once it is done the man cannot do anything else but remain merged in the Self.

D.: Will *bhakti* lead to *mukti*?

M.: Bhakti is not different from *mukti*. *Bhakti* is being as the Self (*Swarupa*).

One is always that. He realises it by the means he adopts. What is *bhakti*? To think of God. That means: only one thought prevails to the exclusion of all other thoughts. That thought is of God which is the Self or it is the Self surrendered into God. When He has taken you up nothing will assail you. The absence of thoughts is *bhakti*. It is also *mukti*.

The *jnana* method is said to be *vichara* (enquiry). That is nothing but 'supreme devotion' (*parabhakti*). The difference is in words only.

You think that *bhakti* is meditation on the Supreme Being. So long as there is *vibhakti* (the sense of separateness), *bhakti* (reunion) is sought. The process will lead to the ultimate goal as is said in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*:

arto jignasush artharthi jnani cha Bharatarshabha
tesham jnani nityayukta ekabhaktir visishyate
** Ch. VII (16,17)*

Any kind of meditation is good. But if the sense of separateness is lost and the object of meditation or the subject who meditates is alone left behind without anything else to know, it is *jnana. Jnana* is said to be *ekabhakti* (single-minded devotion). The *Jnani* is the finality because he has become the Self and there is nothing wrong to do. He is also perfect and so fearless, *dwitiyat val bhayam bhavati* - only the existence of a second gives rise to fear. That is *mukti*. It is also *bhakti*.

3rd October, 1938

526. A visitor asked Sri Bhagavan:

People give some names to God and say that the name is sacred and repetitions of the name bestow merit on the individual. Can it be true?

M.: Why not? You bear a name to which you answer. But your body was not born with that name written on it, nor did it say to any one that it bore such and such a name. Any yet a name is given to you and you answer to that name, because you have identified yourself with the name. Therefore the name signifies something and it is not a mere fiction. Similarly, God's name is effective. Repetition of the name is remembrance of what it signifies. Hence the merit.

But the man did not look satisfied. Finally he wanted to retire and prayed for Sri Bhagavan's Grace.

Sri Bhagavan now asked how mere sounds assuring him of Grace would satisfy him unless he has faith .

Both laughed and the visitor retired.

15th October, 1938

542. 'A' asked: I often desire to live in solitude where I can find all I want with ease, so that I may devote all my time to meditation only. Is such a desire good or bad?

⇦

M.: Such thoughts will bestow a *janma* (reincarnation) for their fulfilment. What does it matter where and how you are placed? The essential point is that the mind must always remain in its source. There is nothing external which is not also internal. The mind is all. If the mind is active even solitude becomes like a market place. There is no use closing your eyes. Close the mental eye and all will be right. The world is not external to you. The good persons will not care to make plans previous to their actions. Why so? For God who has sent us into the world has His own plan and that will certainly work itself out.

543. Many visitors came on one occasion and they all saluted Sri Bhagavan with the single prayer, "Make me a *bhakta*. Give me *moksha*." After they left Sri Bhagavan said, thinking aloud: All of them want *bhakti* and *moksha*. If I say to them, 'Give yourself to me' they will not. How then can they get what they want?

10th June, 1936

198. *D.:* What is Guru's Grace? How does it work?

M.: Guru is the Self.

D.: How does it lead to realisation?

M.: Isvaro gururatmeti… (God is the same as Guru and Self...). A person begins with dissatisfaction. Not content with the world he seeks satisfaction of desires by prayers to God; his mind is purified; he longs to know God more than to satisfy his carnal desires. Then God's Grace begins to manifest. God takes the form of a Guru and appears to the devotee; teaches him the Truth; purifies the mind by his teachings and contact; the mind gains strength, is able to turn inward; with meditation it is purified yet further, and eventually remains still without the least ripple. That stillness is the Self. The Guru is both exterior and interior. From the exterior he gives a push to the mind to turn inward; from the interior he pulls the mind towards the Self and helps the mind to achieve quietness. That is Grace.

Hence there is no difference between God, Guru and Self.

4th February, 1935

24. Mrs. Piggott: Why do you take milk, but not eggs?

M.: The domesticated cows yield more milk than necessary for their calves and they find it a pleasure to be relieved of the milk.

D.: But the hen cannot contain the eggs?

M.: But there are potential lives in them.

D.: Thoughts cease suddenly, then 'I-I' rises up as suddenly and continues. It is only in the feeling and not in the intellect. Can it be right?

M.: It is certainly right. Thoughts must cease and reason disappear for 'I-I' to rise up and be felt.

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Feeling is the prime factor and not reason.

D.: Moreover it is not in the head but in the right side of the chest.

M.: It ought to be so. Because the heart is there.

D.: When I see outside it disappears. What is to be done?

M.: It must be held tight.

D.: If one is active with such remembrance, will the actions be always right?

M.: They ought to be. However, such a person is not concerned with the right or wrong of his actions. Such a person's actions are God's and therefore they must be right.

D.: Why then the restrictions of food given for such?

M.: Your present experience is due to the influence of the atmosphere you are in. Can you have it outside this atmosphere? The experience is spasmodic. Until it becomes permanent practice is necessary. Restrictions of food are aids for such experience to be repeated. After one gets established in truth the restrictions drop away naturally. Moreover, food influences the mind and it must be kept pure.

The lady told a disciple later: "I feel the vibrations from him more intensely and I am able to reach the 'I' centre more readily than before."

29. The conversation turned upon the question as to whether *Iswara Prasad* (Divine Grace) is necessary for the attaining of *samrajya* (universal dominion) or whether a *jiva's* honest and strenuous efforts to attain it cannot of themselves lead him to That from whence is no return to life and death. The Maharshi with an ineffable smile which lit up His Holy Face and which was all-pervasive, shining upon the coterie around him, replied in tones of certainty and with the ring of truth; "Divine Grace is essential for Realisation. It leads one to God-realisation. But such Grace is vouchsafed only to him who is a true devotee or a *yogin*, who has striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom."

The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi

<u>*Edited by Arthur Osborne*</u>

Part One:
Original Works

5. The Essence of Instruction (*Upadesa Saram*)

There is a legend that a group of rishis once lived in the Daruka forest together, practising rites by which they acquired supernatural powers. By the same means they hoped to attain final liberation. In this, however, they were mistaken, for action can only result in action, not in the cessation of action; rites can produce powers but not the peace of liberation which is beyond rites and powers and all forms of action. Siva determined to convince them of their error and therefore appeared before them as a wandering sadhu. Together with him came Vishnu in the form of a beautiful lady. All the rishis were smitten with love for this lady and thereby their equilibrium was disturbed and their rites and powers were adversely affected. Moreover their wives, who were also living with them in the forest, all fell in love with the strange sadhu.

Incensed at this, they conjured up an elephant and a tiger by magic rites and sent them against him. Siva, however, slew them easily and took the elephant's skin for a robe and the tiger's for a wrap. The rishis then realized that they were up against one more powerful than themselves and they bowed down to him and asked him for instruction. He then explained to them that it is not by action but by renunciation of action that one attains liberation.

The poet, Muruganar, wanted to write 100 verses on this theme but he could not readily proceed beyond 70 verses. It then occurred to him that Bhagavan was the proper person to write the verses relating to Siva's instructions. He therefore begged Bhagavan to compose them and Bhagavan accordingly composed thirty Tamil verses. He himself later rendered them into Sanskrit. These thirty verses were subsequently translated by Bhagavan into Telugu under the name of *Anubhuti Saram* first, and *Upadesa Saram* afterwards. Bhagavan likewise rendered them into Malayalam. The Sanskrit version (*Upadesa Saram*), was chanted before him daily together with the Vedas and continues to be chanted before his shrine; that is to say, it is treated as a scripture. He refers to the various paths to liberation, grading them in order of efficiency and excellence, and showing that the best is Self-enquiry.

1. Action yields fruit,
For so the Lord ordains it.
How can action be the Lord?
It is insentient.

8. Better than viewing Him as Other,
Indeed the noblest attitude of all,
Is to hold Him as the 'I' within,
The very 'I'.

10. Absorption in the heart of being,
Whence we sprang,
Is the path of action, of devotion,
Of union and of knowledge.
18. Thoughts alone make up the mind;
And of all thoughts the 'I' thought is the root.
What is called mind is but the notion 'I'.

19. When one turns within and searches
Whence this 'I' thought arises,
The shamed 'I' vanishes -
And wisdom's quest begins.

23. For knowing That which is
There is no other knower.
Hence Being is Awareness;
And we are all Awareness.

24. In the nature of their being creature and creator
Are in substance one.
They differ only
In adjuncts and awareness.

26. To know the Self is but to be the Self,
For it is non-dual.
In such knowledge
One abides as That.

6. Reality In Forty Verses (*Ulladu Narpadu*)

Once Bhagavan composed twenty Tamil stanzas containing his important teachings. They were not written in any particular order to form a poem. Sri Muruganar therefore suggested that Bhagavan should write twenty stanzas more to make the conventional forty. Accordingly, Bhagavan composed twenty more stanzas. Out of these forty, Kavya Kanta Ganapati Muni selected two as the invocatory stanzas. Then Bhagavan wrote two more to complete the forty. some of the stanzas were translations from Sanskrit, but as devotees wanted all the forty verses to be original they were eliminated and new stanzas composed in their place. The verses were all arranged in a continuous order to form a poem. Later, a supplement consisting of a second forty verses was added. So indifferent to authorship was Bhagavan that he did not write all those supplementary verses himself. When he came upon a suitable one he used it - mostly translations from Sanskrit - and when not, he made one. The verses eliminated from the original forty verses were included in the supplement.

These eighty verses are the most comprehensive exposition of the Maharshi's teaching. A number of translations have been made and commentaries written on them. They have been published as a

separate booklet by the Ashram under the titles *Ulladu Narpadu*, *Sad-Vidya* and *Truth Revealed*. Bhagavan translated these verses into Telugu prose under the name of *Unnadi Nalupadi* and into Malayalam verse under the name of *Saddarsanam*.

Invocation

1. Unless Reality exists, can thought of it arise? Since, void of thought, Reality exists within as Heart, how to know the Reality we term the Heart? To know That is merely to be That in the Heart.

The Text

4. If Self has form, the world and God likewise have form. If Self is without form, by whom and how can form (of world and God) be seen? Without the eye, can there be sight or spectacle? The Self, the Real Eye, is infinite.

7. Though the world and mind rise and fade together, the world shines by the light of the mind. The ground whence the world and mind arise, and wherein they set, that Perfection rises not nor sets but ever shines. That is Reality.

10. There is no knowledge without ignorance; and without knowledge ignorance cannot be. To ask, "Whose is this knowledge? Whose this ignorance?" and thus to know the Primal Self, this alone is Knowledge.

13. The Self that is Awareness, That alone is true. The knowledge which is various is ignorance. And even ignorance, which is false, cannot exist apart from the Self. False are the many jewels, for apart from gold, which alone is true, they cannot exist.

24. The body which is matter says not 'I'. Eternal Awareness rises not nor sets. Betwixt the two, bound by the body, rises the thought "I". This is the knot of Matter and Awareness. This is bondage, *jiva*, subtle body, ego. This is *samsara*, this is the mind.

27. 'That' we are, when 'I' has not arisen. Without searching whence the 'I' arises, how to attain the self extinction where no 'I' arises? Without attaining self extinction, how to stay in one's true state where the Self is 'That'?

28. Controlling speech and breath, and diving deep within oneself - like one who, to find a thing that has fallen into water, dives deep down - one must seek out the source whence the aspiring ego springs.

33. To say "I do not know myself" or "I have known myself" is cause for laughter. What? Are there two Selves, one to be known by the other? There is but One, the Truth of the experience of all.

39. Thoughts of bondage and of freedom last only as long as one feels, "I am bound". When one inquires of oneself, "Who am I, the bound one?" the Self Eternal, Ever-free, remains. The thought of bondage goes; and with it goes the thought of freedom too.

6. *Disciple:* 'Who is God?'

Master: 'He who knows the mind.'

D: 'My Self, the Spirit, knows my mind.'

M: 'Therefore you are God: and also because the *Sruti* declares that there is only one God, the Knower.

7. *M:* 'By what light do you see?'

D: 'The sun by day, the lamp by night.'

M: 'By what light do you see these lights!'

D: 'The eye.'

M: 'By what light do you see the eye?'

D: 'The mind.'

M: 'By what light do you know the mind?'

D: 'My Self.'

M: 'You then are the Light of Lights.'

D: 'Yes, That I am.'

8. In the centre of the Heart-Cave there shines alone the one Brahman as the 'I-I', the *Atman*. Reach the Heart by diving deep in quest of the Self, or by controlling the mind with the breath, and stay established in the *Atman*.

24. Therefore by the practice of merging the Ego in the pure Heart which is all Awareness, the tendencies of the mind as well as the breath will be subdued.

34. For unlearned folk there is only one family consisting of wife, children and dependants. But in the mind of those with much learning there are many families of books, theories and opinions as obstacles to yoga.

39. Keep Advaita within the heart. Do not ever carry it into action. Even if you apply it to all the three worlds, O Son, it is not to be applied to the Guru.

Part Two:
Adaptations and Translations

11. Translations from the *Agamas*

The *Agamas* are traditional Hindu scriptures regarded as no less authoritative and authentic than the Vedas. They are regarded as divinely revealed teachings and no human authorship is ascribed to them. Temple worship is mainly founded upon them.

There are twenty-eight *Agamas* that are accepted as authorities. From among them *Sarva Jnanottara* and *Devikalottara* are outstanding as expressing the standpoint of pure Advaita or non-duality. *Atma-Sakshatkhara* is the most essential part of *Sarva Jnanottara*.

The Maharshi spontaneously translated both these *Agamas* into Tamil verse, *Devikalottara* in the very early days when he was living in Virupaksha Cave and the *Atma-Sakshatkhara* in 1933 when he was already in the Ashram at the foot of the hill. Both are instructions in the path of knowledge given by Lord Siva, the latter to his son Guha (another name for Lord Subrahmanya) and the former to his wife, Parvati.

Verses 70-72 in *Devikalottara*, forbidding the harming even of plant life, are not to be taken as applying to aspirants on the path. No extremes of discipline or behaviour are demanded of them. Indeed, as is generally indicated in these two *Agamas*, questions of discipline, ritual, and behaviour are far less important on this path than any other, since it is a path which works directly on the heart, awakening spiritual knowledge.

Devikalottara

Introduction by Sri Bhagavan

This work is one of the *upa-agamas* and explains the supreme wisdom to be attained by mature souls and their mode of life, expounded by the Supreme Lord Siva to Devi Parvati. It is the essence of all *Agama Sastras* on matters of spiritual knowledge. This is verily the boat which can rescue the mortals struggling hard, sinking and rising, in the sorrowful ocean of *samsara* of endless cycles of births and deaths and take them by the direct path to the shore of liberation. Let all earnest seekers after Truth, instead of groping in the dark, bewildered, and losing their way, adopt the help of this straight path and reach the supreme state to bliss and peace.

The Text

Devi:

1. O Lord of all celestial beings! I yearn to know that path of supreme wisdom and the code of conduct by adopting which one can get liberation, so that all humanity may attain salvation. I request you to enlighten me on them, out of your grace.

Isvara:

2. O Queen among women! So that everyone may attain knowledge, I shall clearly explain to you today the highest knowledge and the discipline to be followed by which discerning seekers will attain liberation, which is free from any blemish and is difficult to describe.

13. The consciousness (*chaitanya*) associated with the aspect ‘am’ is called *Sakti*. The universe shines by its light. The entire creation is *Sakti’s sankalpa* (thought). The state (of mind) which is completely devoid of all attachment is the pure (wisdom) to be attained.

14. The void which is the infinite and all-encompassing one whole without a second, which is just the effulgence of pure wisdom, which is completely devoid of visible phenomena and which consists of the aspect 'I', is the seed which fructifies as liberation, bestowing salvation by enabling one to unite with the Supreme.

34. When once the mind becomes steady, it should not be disturbed in any way. There is no need to think even in the least of anything else, entertaining any doubts. Fixing the mind firmly in that state (of self-awareness) keep it still.

39. If the mind falls into sleep, awaken it. Then if it starts wandering, make it quiet. If you reach the state where there is neither sleep nor movement of mind, stay still in that, that natural (real) state.
61. Having thus explained the nature of knowledge to enable everyone to attain liberation, which is always available, I shall now proceed to describe the conduct to be adopted by the seekers. Noble Lady, listen to them calmly.

65. Renounce completely all religious edicts and disciplines. Since all kinds of action result in bondage, give up all action-plans, mental conflicts, and attachment to one's caste-duties.

69. Listen to me, Lady! Know that only the wise man who never does anything which leads to the destruction of any form of life, such as insects, works, birds or plants, is a person who is seeking true knowledge.

76. Being unaffected by either praise or slander, treating alike all creatures, he should always unfailingly maintain an equality of vision (*sama drishti*), considering all living beings in the world as himself.

83. My dearest, earnest seekers who see the enlightened one and worship him with all the three instruments (mind, speech and body) in unison, offering him with heart-melting love, sweet-smelling sandal paste, fruits, flowers, incense, good water to bathe, clothes and food, will thus attain liberation. Know that those who worship that *jnani* reap the fruit of his righteous deeds and those who slander him reap the result of his sins.

84. I have revealed the truth about knowledge and the conduct pertaining thereto, as you have asked. This entire path is indeed *Kalottara Jnana* (the knowledge to be revealed at the final stage of maturity). Tell me, O Lady, if you want to ask anything more.

12. Translations from Shankaracharya

Vivekachudamani

This work by Shankaracharya together with the *Drik Drishya Viveka*, was translated into Tamil prose by Bhagavan while he was still living in Virupaksha Cave. It is a very free translation, even the order of the paragraphs being changed to some extent.

In order to be qualified for enquiry into the Self, a man must have a powerful intellect and ability to

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seize the essential and reject the inessential besides the various qualities enumerated in the scriptures. What are these? He must be able to discriminate between the real and the unreal. He must have an unattached mind. He must ardently desire liberation. And he must be tireless in practice. Only such a one is qualified to enquire into Brahman. The qualifications are enumerated as follows:

1. Discrimination between the real and the unreal.

2. Disinclination to enjoy the fruits of one's actions either in this or in any further life.

3. The six virtues of tranquillity, self-control, withdrawal, forbearance, faith and concentration of the Self.

4. Intense yearning for liberation.

The aspirant must indeed have these qualities in order to attain abidance in the Self; without them there can be no realisation of the Truth.

In a text such as "He is that Devadatta" we eliminate the contradictory aspects of Devadatta manifested at different places and times, and concentrate on the identity of Devadatta himself irrespective of place and time. Similarly, in the text in question, we eliminate the non-existent, objective, contradictory attributes of 'that' and 'thou' as "not this, not this" (am I). You can do this on the authority of the Vedas which reject the duality superimposed on Brahman, and also by your own intelligence. If attributes such as a shield for a royal person and a badge of ownership for a slave are removed, both alike belong to the genus man. Similarly the text (about 'that' and 'thou') declares the natural identity between *Isvara* and the individual in their residuary aspect of Consciousness apart from the forms of *Isvara* and individual. There is no contradiction in this, since Consciousness is the unbroken, single essence of both. Through the touch of the mahatmas, know this blessed identity of Brahman and Self by rejecting as 'not I' the non-existent body. Know by your own clear intellect that Brahman is your Self, self-existent, subtle as the ether, ever radiant, true, awareness, bliss, indivisible and whole.

In the cavity of the intellect is the single truth of Brahman, distinct from the being and non-being. He who remains eternally as that Truth itself is never drawn back again to birth in the body.

He who meditates becomes that aspect of his being to which the consciousness is drawn: if to the body, he becomes body, if to the senses he becomes senses, if to the life-breath, he becomes that, if to the mind or intellect, he becomes mind or intellect. Therefore, rejecting all these, the consciousness should subside and obtain peace in Brahman, which is eternal Bliss.

Knowledge leads to non-attachment; solitude and abandonment of home lead to knowledge; the bliss of Self experience and tranquility results from cessation of activity. If these results are not obtained step by step, the previous steps become invalid. The perfection of non-attachment is when previous tendencies to seek enjoyment no longer arise. The perfection of knowledge is when the 'I-sense' no longer pertains to the body. The perfection of solitude is when thoughts subside through perpetual striving and, dissolving in Brahman, no longer turn outwards.

Do not differentiate Self and Brahman or between world and Brahman. On the authority of the Vedas realize 'I am Brahman'. Attain the pure beatitude of oneness and establish the pure consciousness immovably in Brahman so that you become dissolved in Brahman.

The essence of the Vedantic scriptures may be condensed into the following points.

First: In me, the unmoving Brahman, all that seems different is utterly without reality. I alone am. This is called the standpoint of elimination (*badha drishti*).

Second: The dream and all else that appears in me as the result of magic is an illusion. I alone am the Truth. This is called the standpoint of illusion (*mithya drishti*).

Third: All that appears as form apart from the sea, that is the bubble and the wave, is the sea. All that is seen in a dream is seen in him who sees the dream. Similarly, in me as in the ocean or the man who dreams, all that seems separate from me is myself. This is called the standpoint of resolving (the effect into its cause) (pravikalpa drishti).

Reject the outer world by any of these three means and recognize him who sees it to be infinite, pure, homogeneous Brahman, who is the Self. He who has thus realized Brahman is liberated. Although all three of these viewpoints are aids to realization, the third, in which one conceives everything as one's own Self, is the most powerful. Therefore, knowing the indivisible Self to be one's own Self, by one's own experience, one must abide in one's own nature, beyond any mental form. What more is there to say? The whole world and all individuals are really Brahman, and abidance as that indivisible Brahman is itself deliverance. This is the essence and conclusion of all the Vedas. The scriptures are the authority for this.

The disciple realized the truth of the Self through these words of the Guru, through the authority of the scriptures and by his own understanding. He controlled his sense organs and, becoming one-pointed, remained for a short time absorbed in unswerving *samadhi* in that supreme Self. The he rose up and spoke thus to his Guru:

Oh Master of the supreme experience, incarnation of the supreme peace, of Brahman, of the eternal essence of non-duality, endless ocean of grace, I bow down to you.

Drik Drisya Viveka

The Text

All our perception pertains to the non-Self. The immutable Seer is indeed the Self. All the countless scriptures proclaim only discrimination between Self and non-Self.

The world we see, being seen by the eye, is *drisya* (object); the eye which sees it is *drik* (subject). But the eye, being perceived by the mind is *drisya* (object) and the mind which sees it is *drik* (subject). The mind, with its thoughts perceived by the Self, is *drisya* (object) and the Self is *drik* (subject).

The Self cannot be *drisya* (object), not being perceived by anything else. The forms perceived are various, blue and yellow, gross and subtle, tall and short, and so on; but the eye that sees them remains one and the same. Similarly, the varying qualities of the eye, such as blindness, dullness and keenness and of the ears and other organs, are perceived by the mind singly. So, too, the various characteristics of the mind, such as desire, determination, doubt, faith, want of faith, courage, want of courage, fear, shyness, discrimination, good and bad, are all perceived by the Self singly. This Self neither rises nor sets, neither increases nor decays. It shines of its own luminosity. It illumines everything else without the need for aid from other sources.

Buddhis, as the sum total of the inner organs, in contact with the reflected consciousness has two aspects. One is called egoity and the other mind. This contact of the *buddhi* with the reflected consciousness is like the identity of a red-hot iron ball with fire. Hence the gross body passes for a conscious entity. The contact establishing identity between the ego and the reflected Consciousness, is of three kinds.

1. The identification of the ego with the reflected Consciousness is natural or innate.

2. The identification of the ego with the body is due to past karma.

3. The identification of the ego with the witness is due to ignorance.

Of the five characteristics, Being, Consciousness, Bliss, name and form, the first three pertain to Brahman and name and form to the world. The three aspects of Being, Consciousness and Bliss exist equally in the five elements of ether, air, water and earth and in *devas* (gods), animals, men, etc., whereas the names and forms are different. Therefore, be indifferent to names and forms, concentrate on Being-Consciousness-Bliss and constantly practise *samadhi* (identity with Brahman) within the heart or outside.

Of the three modes of individual being, the limited self (as in deep sleep), the empirical self (as in the waking state) and the dreaming self, only the individual limited by the deep sleep state is the true Self (*paramarthika*). Even he is but an idea. The Absolute alone is the true Self. In reality and by nature he is Brahman itself, only superimposition creates the limitations of individuality in the Absolute. It is to the *paramarthika jiva* that the identity of *Tat Twam Asi* (That thou art) and other great texts of the Upanishads applies, and not to any other.

The sweetness, liquidity, and coldness of water are characteristics present equally in waves and foam. So, too, the Being-Consciousness-Bliss character of the Self (the *paramarthika*) is present in the empirical self and through him in the dream self also, because of their being only illusory creations of the Self. The foam with its qualities, such as coldness, subsides in the waves, the waves with their characteristics, such as liquidity, subside in the water, and the ocean alone exists as at first. Similarly, the dream self and its objects are absorbed in the empirical self; then the empirical world with its characteristics is absorbed in the *paramarthika* and, as at first, Being-Consciousness-Bliss which is Brahman shines alone.

THE GARLAND OF GURU'S SAYINGS

Guru Vachaka Kovai

Translated by Prof. K. Swaminathan from the Tamil original of Sri Muruganar

Publisher's Note

The most comprehensive collection of the Maharshi's sayings is *Guru Vachaka Kovai* (*The Garland of Guru's Sayings*) composed and strung together artistically by the poet Muruganar. In this massive Tamil work of 1282 stanzas (1254 being Muruganar's handiwork and 28 the Maharshi's), each stanza presents, in a well wrought and finely polished setting, a pearl that fell from the Master's lips. Not only are these stanzas arranged in the most logically effective order, under 231 chapters, but most of them were seen and approved by the Master, who has supplied some links and re-statements of his own to emphasise a point or tighten up or clarify the argument.

The Garland focuses the light on what the Maharshi said regardless of when or why he said it, and the sayings are strung together in a manner which is intellectually satisfying.

Introduction

Born to Sri Krishna Iyer of Ramanathapuram in 1890, the child was originally named Sambamurti. However, the official name was C. K. Subramanya Iyer. He, who in later years could sing and pour out verses in torrent, could hardly speak and was almost dumb till the age of five. Having lost his father early in life, he lived in Coimbatore and received his education there.

Having studied the Tirukkural thoroughly he followed its precepts meticulously in his life. Out of love for Tamil he changed his name to Mugavai Kanna Muruganar (see v.13 of *The Garland*), corresponding to his original name.

Not only was he a noted scholar, but also a spiritually oriented nationalist and was greatly influenced by Gandhiji's liberation movement. His first volume of poems was "*Swatantra Gitam*."

He first came to Sri Bhagavan in 1923. This darshan and the intense gaze of Sri Bhagavan transformed his being. When thus he came under the spell of the Master, all lesser lights were absorbed in the radiance of His presence and he never again wrote on any theme other than the glory and the sayings of the Master.

Muruganar's self-effacement was total and he sat immortal in the shadow of Ramana's Feet. He passed away on August 28, 1973 amidst the chanting of the devotees in praise of Sri Arunachala and Sri Ramana.

Sri Ramanasramam
K. Swaminathan
29.9.1990

1. Invocation to the Guru

(1)
To save from dire despondency
Those who yearn for, and yet are, far,
Far from the goal of final Freedom,
This Lamp of Guru's wisdom lit
To put to fight the illusion of "I"
And "mine", shines as the very Self.

Part I, The Quest

1. Actuality of the World

(45)
As several ornaments appear
In gold and share its glitter, all beings
Moving and unmoving appear
In Self alone and shine as such.
Apart from Self nothing exists.

(60)
With mind turned inward, drown the world
In the great void, dispel illusion.
Beholding then the void as void,
Destroy the void by drowning it
In the deep ocean of Self-Awareness.

6. Illusory Appearance

(99)
Without the body, the world is not.
Without the mind, the body is not.
Without awareness, there is no mind.
And without being there is no
Awareness.

45. Of Non-Attachment

(242)
From the mind's fortress held by foes,
Innumerable memories, one by one
They issue. With the wonder-weapon
Of self-enquiry slay each thought
As it comes out in the open,
Till at last you have retrieved
The citadel of your own heart.

51. The Heart

(261)
Though present everywhere, the Heart
Is not within and not without.
The body which alone admits
Of in and out is but a concept
Of the thinking mind.

53. Guru's Grace

(284)
Those on whom the guru's glance
Of grace has fallen are like the deer
Caught in a tiger's jaw. They are bound
To have their wretched ego slain
And know the one supreme Awareness.
They will never be forsaken.

56. Reverence to the Guru

(317)
After surrendering to the Guru
Body, mind and all belongings,
To still regard these as "I" and "mine"
Is taking back a gift once given.
Strict avoidance of this sin
Is pure worship of the Master.

62. Infinite Vision

(347)
Those with physical eyes alone
See God in beautiful objects,
Yogis see Him in the heart-lotus;
Priests see Him in the sacred fire.
The truly wise have a thousand eyes
And see Him everywhere.

63. Ego - Less

(355)
In deep sleep where the world is not,
And "I" as body too is not,
The Self as Being persistent shines.
Hence the true I, one must agree,
Is only the immutable Self.

68. Freedom from Bondage

(383)
The separate self is but the mind
Drunk with and reeling under the notion
That it is bound. This very mind
When it stands steady, still, desiring
Nothing and proud of nothing
Becomes the Self supreme.

71. Awareness

(432)
Is it not because of you and yourself
Awareness that you now perceive
This universe? If you observe
Awareness steadily, this awareness
Itself as Guru will reveal
The Truth.

77. True Being

(463)
Present when we do not search
And absent when we truly see,
The petty mind's illusive serpent
Sinks, disappears and merges
In the rope of Self-awareness
Which now as sole Reality
Alone abides.

80. Self Surrender

(480)
"Give yourself to God", they say.
But is it ours to give, not His already?
Now at least let us repent
The theft and at His lotus Feet
Restore what we had stolen.

84. Meekness

(497)
Beholding in all beings but the Self,
Meeker than all and even meeker
Than His humblest devotees,
By virtue of such meekness the Supreme
Achieves supremacy.

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Part II - Continued Practice

6. Vanity of Argument

(522)
“Of fate and effort, which is stronger?
Which will yield? Which will prevail?”
Those who wage this war of words
Are wholly ignorant of That from which
The world and the ego both appear
And into which they disappear.

12. Waking Dream

(555)
The wise ones hold that dream and waking
Are both creations of the mind
Confused. Since both are filled with thoughts
And names and forms, we too conclude
They are just the same.

16. Sense Pleasures

(592)
As fire when it is fed with ghee
Leaps up erect, unquenched,
Desire too when gratified
Rejoices and revives in strength.

23. Wonderful Maya

(622)
Though we are ever That and only
That, how wonderful it is
To watch the paths we tread, the pains
We take, for winning This, as if
This were something alien and remote.

30. Denotative Knowledge

(642)
Oneself, no other, is the Self.
Deeming it different and so making
Strenuous efforts to attain it
Is like running hard to catch
One’s own shadow.

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31. Ending Indicative Knowledge

(646)
The gracious light of Self one sees not
When looking for it as an object.
But when one looks not, then it shines.
"The maiden when I look at her
Glances downward at the ground.
But when I look elsewhere she looks
At me and shyly smiles."

51. The Holy Name

(717)
The word "I" seems to mean at first
The body-bound ego. But this "I"
Appears and disappears.
Looked deeper, the correct import
Of I is seen to be the Self, which is
The ego's ground and source.

54. Bhakti-Vichara

(731)
The way of knowledge and the way of love
Are interwoven close. Don't tear
Asunder these inseparables
But practice both together holding
In the heart the two as one.

61. Other Sadhanas

(756)
Barring fruitful self-enquiry
There is, for real mind-control,
No other sadhana whatsoever.
The mind may seem to be controlled
By other methods. But after a while
It will spring up again.

65. Pure Being

(773)
What our Master clearly teaches
By way of great, good, powerful tapas
Is only this and nothing more
BE STILL.
Apart from this, the mind has no
Task to do or thought to think.

68. Seekers Conduct

(794)
When all your efforts end in failure
It means that you are being taught
The lesson that, not your own efforts,
But God's good grace alone can bring
Success and you should seek His grace.

73. Service to 'Others'

(807)
Whatever on to "others" gives
Is well and truly given to oneself.
Who knowing this would fail to give
Generous service to the world?

81. The Whole Mind

(842)
The householder who realizes
That he is not the body family-bound
Is a more advanced renunciant than
The ascetic who feels proud at heart
That he has given up all attachments.

84. Who is the Witness

(876)
Until the snake-illusion goes
Its ground, the real rope, will not
Be recognised. Until the world
Of false phenomena disappears,
The Self, its ground, will not shine clear.

Part III : Experience of Reality

2. Eternal Awareness

(892)
When the seeker tries to realize
The non-duality of the Self,
Fumbles and fails again, again,
And finally his efforts stop,
It is then, just then, that in his heart
Shines the Self as true Awareness.

7. Destruction of the Mind

(919)
The calm and clear awareness where
There is no movement of the mind
Is firm samadhi, moksha-like.
Try earnestly to free the mind
From traitor thoughts and so experience
Calm and clear awareness, purity of heart.

26. Cosmic Consciousness

(1005)
The state in which no "other" is seen,
No "other" heard, no "other" known,
Know that this and this alone
Is cosmic consciousness.

32. Nature of Self

(1051)
The inner Ruler who within
Each living being lives unknown,
Uses each body as his own,
And ceaseless, tireless moves it, He
Is the immortal Self.

40. Authentic Living

(1090)
Shun anger and desire; destroy
Illusions false that cause confusion,
Behave at all times with detachment
Calm. This is authentic living.
To this hold fast.

41. The Formless

(1098)
If I have form, the Lord, the source
Of Being, appears with form. But if
I am bodiless, formless, then there is
No awareness of another. How
Could one say that God has form?

48. Jivan Muktas

(1150)
As only a serpent known a serpent's
Spoor, so only a jnani knows
A jnani's nature. Others can
But misunderstand it, never
Know it as it truly is.

49. Jnanis

(1158)
Far different from the scholar learned
In books of wisdom is the Seer.
Those who seek freedom from the bondage
Of ignorance had better leave
Scholars alone and enter the presence
Of Seers established in the Self
Supreme.

54. Supreme Bhakti

(1205)
The mark of bhakti true, total
Self-surrender at Siva's Feet,
Is perfect peace without a thought
Or word of prayer or plaint.

58. The Truth Experience

(1227)
There is no creation, no destruction,
No one bound, and none at all
For freedom yearning much and striving
Hard; none attaining mukti.
Know this to be the Truth supreme.

61. Describing the Experience

(1245)
In my sight 'I' only am
And 'you' are not. In your sight
'You' only are and 'I' am not.
In the sight of the Self the Self alone
Exists and nothing else.
In truth I, you and all are nothing
But the Self.

The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana

By
K. K. Nambiar

Preface

In *The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana*, Sri. K. K. Nambiar, an ardent devotee, has given us an ultimate glimpse into his life as guided by his Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramana. We are grateful to the Ramana Kendra, Madras, for requesting its Chairman, Sri. K. K. Nambiar, to give a series of talks on his reminiscences of Sri Bhagavan. These reminiscences which span over five decades of service and devotion to Sri Bhagavan and Sri Ramanasramam, have now been collected to form this book.

Foreword

A friend of mine an IAS Officer, Commissioner and Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu called on me most unexpectedly and mentioned that he had an inner mystic urge to come and tell me that I should, without further delay, publish all my reminiscences about Ramana Maharshi, either in a book form or through a series of articles in the journal The Mountain Path. I too had a dream on 14.9.83 that I should commence writing the reminiscences and that Bhagavan would help me to see it through.

K. K. Nambiar

Notebook incident

I had a vivid dream, or vision, whatever one may call it. I saw Bhagavan standing on a lawn with half a dozen Brahmin boys sitting around him in a circle. Bhagavan was reciting some Sanskrit verses which the boys were repeating. Actually he was reciting *Shyamala Dandakam* itself which I used to recite - part of *stotras* in praise of the Goddess. This appeared to me a straight answer from Bhagavan to the question I had failed to put to him the previous night. Then the scene changed in the dream. The boys doing *parayana* were not there. Bhagavan beckoned me to go near him and asked me for a note-book to write something. When I told him that I had only an octavo size note-book ready to spare, he said that it was all right. The dream ended there, but it made such a deep impression on my mind that I could not delay carrying out the behest, however strange it might seem to others. After an early bath, I traced out the spare note-book, dusted it and hurried to the Ashram. Prostrating before Bhagavan as usual I handed over the note-book to him. He received it smilingly and asked me what made me take the note-book to him, when I related to him in a whisper all about the dream I had early that morning. Immediately he called his personal attendant, the late Madhavaswami, and asked, him, "Madhava, did I not ask you last evening to fetch a note-book to write down a Malayalam Translation of the Sanskrit text of *Ramana-Gita*? You didn't bring one. Here is Nambiar who has brought it for me. It seems he had a dream in which I asked him for such a book and he has brought it." Bhagavan also asked me to speak all about the dream so that other devotees in the hall could all hear it. This incident aroused a great deal of interest among the devotees.

A Bet on my Prayer

I was talking to Sri Venkataratnam at his residence about my implicit faith in Bhagavan looking after his devotees, when he said "let us see about your journey to Madras; getting accommodation in the connecting train at Villupuram at night is always a gamble. There are three trains all near about midnight and one has to take a chance. It is very seldom that you get seats in the first train. Besides you are a party of five and that makes it extremely difficult". I said I had no worry as Bhagavan would take good care of us. At this, he interjected, "Let us have a bet on this" and we decided to make it a crucial test.

On the return journey Mr. Venkataratnam saw us off at Tiruvannamalai station, where comfortable accommodation in a first class compartment was secured for us. He also sent a peon to accompany us in the same train upto Villupuram junction with the twofold objective of rendering us any assistance necessary until we were safely berthed in a connecting train at Villupuram, as also to check up on our bet how Bhagavan would come to our rescue to solve the usual difficulty expected at Villupuram Junction.

We alighted at Villupuram and waited for the first Madras bound train to arrive. We introduced ourselves to the Ticket Examiner, who promised his assistance to find suitable berths for all of us. When the train steamed in, we walked past all the upper class compartments, the Ticket Examiner keeping count of the vacant berths available. There were only two berths available in two different compartments.

Those two were upper berths and we were five in all. We could not accept the two berths and could not break up the party and travel by night. All that the friendly Ticket Examiner could do was to suggest that we try our luck with the next train. But I would not give up hope. I was all the while praying to Sri Bhagavan and could not reconcile myself to the idea that we would be left stranded. Musing thus within myself, I felt like walking up to the front end of the train, where there were a few closed bogies adjacent to the engine. No passenger coaches are generally connected there but on that night, there was a brand-new looking first class bogie next to the engine nicely done up and polished and completely shuttered and closed being towed to Madras for some special purpose. On seeing it, I ran back along the platform and spoke to the Ticket Examiner about it. The sceptical Railway official came up with me and was surprised to find a new coach with all the doors and windows locked. On opening it with a key, we found an exquisite compartment with all the seats empty. With his permission all of us entered the compartment - six berths, all to ourselves - specially reserved! I repeated aloud "Om Namo Bhagavathe Sri Ramanaya! I have won the bet!" Need we have any doubt whether Sri Bhagavan would answer the silent prayers of his devotees?

Mr. Venkataratnam's peon went back to Tiruvannamalai and narrated to him details about this miraculous incident. He was very pleasantly surprised and wrote to me admitting that he lost the bet and his faith in Sri Bhagavan increased by leaps and bounds as it were. For me this was one more addition to my ever increasing list of miraculous incidents attributable solely to Bhagavan's Grace towards this devotee whose surrender at his feet some years ago is now constantly repeated day and night.

Mrs. Victoria Doe

After reaching London, I took an early opportunity to go to Epsom, which was about three quarters of an

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hour journey by train to meet Mrs. Victoria Doe at her quiet residence, at 17, St. Martins Avenue. It was on 19.5.46, Mrs. Doe, who was nearing 80, lived with her only daughter, Miss Leena Doe. She had never come to India, never seen Bhagavan Sri Ramana in flesh and blood. Yet I was deeply moved by her devotion to Him. She had read about Him, prayed to Him, meditated on Him and lived in Him day in and day out. There was something trans-mundane, something related to a sphere other than the physical world that occasioned my visit to this elderly lady, who was a recluse to the social life in England. It seems she had written to the Ashram that much as she would have liked to go over to India to have a darshan of Sri Bhagavan, her circumstances did not permit it, and that she was very desirous if at least meeting some one who had seen him and had the good fortune to sit at his feet. Hence, the visit I paid her on the suggestion from the Ashram, was, in fact, the fulfilment of her long cherished desire.

Mrs. Doe with shaking hands took from her shelves sheaves of letters received from the Ashram and after kissing them with great reverence handed them over to me for perusal. All those were letters from the Ashram and had been meticulously preserved by her for many years. She had also with her all the English Publications of Sri Ramanasramam. She opened one of the books and running her shaky finger along the inscription on the first page "with Gracious Blessings from Sri Bhagavan", burst into tears of joy and devotion. When she composed herself, she said "Mr. Nambiar, how lucky you are to have been able to be with Him, to see Him and hear Him speak. Here we treasure these books and letters as representing Him. Now he has sent you here. I feel that He is with us now". Such love, such devotion to the Sage, so tenderly expressed, moved me to the depths of my being. Verily His Kingdom is the Heart of the devotee, and I have always found Him there enthroned.

Meteor in the sky

Later in the evening, after dinner, my wife and I with children came out into the courtyard and were discussing among ourselves where to have a sit out, where to locate the benches, when suddenly my younger son , Vijayan started looking at the sky. "Papa, see what is in the sky, a big star?" We all looked up. Somewhere in the western sky was a bright meteor moving at an unusual speed, too slow for a shooting star, and too fast for an aircraft. My immediate intuition was about Bhagavan and I exclaimed, "It is Bhagavan passing away" and started reciting the *sloka*:

Aparasatchit Sukhavariraser
Yasyormimatram bhuvanam samastam
Guhahitam tam Ramanam gabheeram
Cintaviheenam hridi cintayami

Meanwhile we were watching the meteor moving across the firmament and finally vanishing in the eastern horizon. The time was 8.47 p.m. We had no doubt that the heavenly indication was about Bhagavan's Mahanirvana. I was so sure about it that I even mentioned to my wife that I should leave for Tiruvannamalai immediately. Soon after, we got a telephone message from my friend Sri. P. S. G. Rao who lived nearby that he go the news of Bhagavan's passing away from his friend in the P.T.I. (Press Trust of India).

Having packed some clothes, etc., to stay for a couple of days, if need be, at Tiruvannamalai, I left at about midnight driving my own car and reached the ashram in the small hours of the morning.

श्री

गीतासारः

OR

THE SONG CELESTIAL

(VERSES FROM SRI BHAGAVAD GITA)

Selected & Reset by

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

धन्यवादः।

अहो भाग्यं पुरा गीतां
योऽवदच्छ्रीपतिः स्वयम् ।
अद्य श्री रमणो भूत्वा
गीतासारं ददौ स नः ॥

Glory be! Of that ancient Gita
Sung by the Lord Himself as Sri Krishna,
Is now given the quintessence
Drawn by Him as Sri Ramana.

श्री

गीतासार:

The Song Celestial

श्रीभगवानुवाच —

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहु: क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विद: ॥ 2 ॥

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ 3 ॥

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थित: ।
अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ 4 ॥

The Blessed Lord said:-

2. This body, O son of Kunti, is called the *kshetra* (field); him who knows it, the sages call, the *kshetrajna* (knower of the field). (xiii. 2)

3. Know Me also as the knower of the field in all the fields, O Bharata: knowledge of the field and of the knower of the field I deem to be true knowledge. (xiii. 2)

4. I am the Self, O Gudakesa, dwelling in the Heart of every being; I am the beginning and the middle, and likewise the end of all beings. (x. 20)

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सत: ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभि: ॥ 9 ॥

9. Of the non-existent there is no being, and of what exists there is no non-being; the definite ascertainment of both is seen by the seers of the essence of Truth. (ii. 16)

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥ 16 ॥

16. By devotion alone, without the ‘otherness’, O Arjuna, thus can I be known, and seen, and in essence entered, O Parantapa. (xi. 54)

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यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥ 25 ॥

25. Whose every enterprise is without desire or motive, whose actions are burnt up in the fire of knowledge, him the wise call a Sage. (iv 19)

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निस्स्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ 35 ॥

35. Having cast away all desires, that man who goes without longing, devoid of 'I' and 'mine' - he doth attain peace. (ii, 71)

यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ 40 ॥

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ 41 ॥

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ 42 ॥

40. Content to take what chance may bring, having transcended the pairs, free from ill-will, and even-minded in success or failure, though he works, he is not bound. (iv. 22)

41. The Lord, O Arjuna, dwells in the Heart of every being and by His mysterious power spins round all beings set on the machine. (xviii. 61)

42. Unto Him alone surrender, O Bharata, with all thy being; by His Grace shalt thou obtain Peace Supreme, the Abode Eternal. (xviii. 62)

सारोऽयमिह सारस्य गीतायाः सुविराजते ।
संगृहीतो भगवता रमणेन महर्षिणा ॥

यः श्लोकान्श्रद्धयाऽधीते द्विचत्वारिंश सङ्ख्यकान् ।
सोऽधिगत्या तु गीतायास्तात्पर्यं सुखमृच्छति ॥

Thus shines the quintessence of the Gita consisting of the verses selected by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

He who studies with earnestness and devotion; these verses, forty-two in number, attains easily the knowledge imparted by the Gita.

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Explanatory Note

What is the abiding Truth sought by man throughout the ages? How is it realized in this life of ours, a life so transient and yet so apparently full of sorrow? In answer to these questions (implicit in the opening verse of this Gita-booklet), Sri Krishna offered the eternal Message of Wisdom, KNOW THYSELF, which is also the quintessence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings, which enjoin the earnest aspirant to enquire "WHO AM I?", as the direct means to SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

In order to convey this Message in a pointed manner, Sri Maharshi, at the request of devotees, selected these forty-two out of the seven hundred verses of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and arranged them in the particular order in which the reader finds in this booklet, SONG CELESTIAL.

The emphasis is primarily on *jnana* and *bhakti margas*, the path of *nishkama-karma* being implicit in either. Indeed, according to Sri Maharshi, it is only a *jnani* that can be a good *karma yogi*. These forty-two verses contain the essence of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and they show to the aspirant the direct means to realize the *Sat-Chit-Ananda Atman*, the Self Absolute, which is the one, ultimate object of man's quest throughout the ages.

The Truth Eternal thus sought is One and Immutable, and it is within oneself. Everything that is outside one's being is transient and mutable. Therefore, search for the Truth abiding within oneself involves the renunciation of all that is outside. Withdrawing the mind from all external things including the physical body and its environment, the aspirant has to seek the Self by tracing the 'I-thought' to its Source. This enquiry into oneself in order to know and realize the Self or *Atman* as the One Eternal Reality, as distinguished from the body, mind and the world which are unreal and impermanent, is referred to as क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानम्, knowledge of the field and the knower of the field. To know this Self as verily the Lord Himself, the Supreme Being, Eternal and Infinite, that dwells in the Heart is the realization of Truth. The Supreme Lord Himself is the *kshetrajna*, identical with the Self. क्षेत्रज्ञ चापि मां विद्धि, know Me also the knower of the field, says the Lord, and in the next verse He declares, I am the Self dwelling in the heart of every being, अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः. Knowledge of the Self is, therefore, knowledge of the Supreme Being, the Eternal Reality, which is the beginning, middle and likewise the end of all beings: (Verses 2 to 4).

The Self or Supreme Being is unborn and abiding, eternal and ancient, अजो नित्यश्शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो, and, in order to point out the distinction between the eternal nature of the Self and the mutability of the body, it is clearly stated, He (the Self) is not slain when the body is slain, न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे. Similarly, in order to point out that the Self in the physical body is identical with the Universal Being, the tenth verse says, the Self abiding everywhere is not polluted in the body, सर्वत्रावस्थितो देहे तथाऽऽत्मा नोपलिप्यते. The Self is immutable, all-pervasive, one and absolute. It is the self-luminous Being by virtue of which all else is known; the sun, moon and fire cannot, therefore, illumine it.

The Lord is identical with the Self and abides in the Heart of one and all. To seek the Self and abide as one with it in the Heart is at once knowledge and devotion. In that state there is no 'otherness'; only thus, that is, without the least trace of 'otherness', can the Lord be seen, known and in essence entered. Such realization is possible only if the seeker has unswerving faith and earnestness of purpose; because,

without these twin virtues of faith and earnestness, no sustained effort is possible: (Verse 16).

The *jnani* is free from the three-fold *karma*, past, present and future. He is free from past *karma*, because he has no desire or urge to act, which is due to the presence of *vasanas*. The *jnani* is free from *vasanas*, because one who has *vasanas* is no *jnani* at all. The *jnani* is free from present *karma*, because he remains actionless even while he acts; in the words of the *Gita*, he sees inaction in action, just as he sees action in inaction by virtue of his abidance in the actionless Brahman, which abidance has become the one mighty act of his life. Finally, he is free from future *karma*, because his past *karma* is destroyed with the destruction of the *vasanas* and the present *karma* is rendered innocuous by virtue of his perpetual abidance in the actionless state even while apparently acting. The phrase 'burnt up' implies the total destruction of the three-fold *karma*: (Verses 24 to 26).

Know this finally that that supreme state of beatitude is attained only by absolute surrender to the Lord Who dwells as the Self in the Heart, and by His Grace alone will you obtain Peace, the Abode Eternal: (Verses 41 & 42).

This is the quintessence of Sri Krishna's Celestial Song of the *Gita*, which Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi has given us, and may His Grace enable us to realize the Peace and Bliss of the Self Transcendental !

The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words

Edited by Arthur Osborne

Preface

The purpose of the present book is to build up a general exposition of the Maharshi's teachings by selecting and fitting together passages from these dialogues and from his writings (published as The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi published by Messrs. Rider and Co., in England and by Sri Ramanasramam in India). The editor's comments have been kept to a minimum and are printed in smaller type to distinguish them clearly from the Maharshi's own words.

So far as is possible, Sanskrit words have been avoided, and it usually has been possible. The purpose of this is to make the book easier to read and also to avoid giving the false impression that the quest of Self-Realisation is some intricate science which can be understood only with a knowledge of Sanskrit terminology. It is true that there are spiritual sciences which have a necessary technical terminology, but they are more indirect. The clear and simple truth of non-duality which Bhagavan taught and the direct path of Self-enquiry which he enjoined can be expounded in simple language; and indeed, he himself expounded them so to Western visitors, without having recourse to Sanskrit terminology. In the rare cases where a Sanskrit term has seemed necessary or useful in this book its approximate meaning has been indicated in brackets, so that no glossary is necessary. It may also be remarked that the English words - Enlightenment, Liberation, and Self-Realisation have all been used with the same meaning, to correspond with the Sanskrit words *Jnana, Moksha* and *Mukti*.

In places where the English of the source quoted seemed infelicitous, it has been altered. This implies no infidelity to the texts since the replies were mostly given in Tamil or other South Indian languages and later rendered into English. The meaning has not been changed.

Arthur Osborne

Chapter 1
The Basic Theory

Heart and Head

This seems a suitable place to set forth the Maharshi's teaching about heart and head. He taught that the heart, not the head, is the true seat of Consciousness; but by this he did not mean the physical organ at the left side of the chest but the heart at the right, and by 'consciousness' he did not mean thought but pure awareness or sense of being. He had found this from his own experience to be the centre of spiritual awareness and then found his experience confirmed in some ancient texts. When his devotees were instructed to concentrate on the heart, it was this spiritual heart upon the right that was referred

to; and they also found it the centre of an actual, almost physical vibration of awareness. However, he would also speak of the Heart as equivalent to the Self and remind them that in truth it is not in the body at all, but is spaceless.

D: Why do you say that the heart is on the right when biologists have found it to be on the left? What authority have you?

B: No one denies that the physical organ is on the left; but the heart which I speak is on the right. That is my experience and I require no authority for it; still you can find confirmation of it in a Malayali book on Ayurveda and in the *Sita Upanishad*.

Saying this, Bhagavan showed the quotation from the latter and quoted the text from the former. Sometimes, when asked, he referred also to the Biblical text from Ecclesiastes: "The wise man's heart is at the right and a fool's heart is at the left."

D: Why do we have a place such as the heart to concentrate on for meditation?

B: Because you seek true Consciousness. Where can you find it? Can you attain it outside yourself? You have to find it internally. Therefore you are directed inward. The Heart is the seat of Consciousness or Consciousness itself.

I ask you to observe where the 'I' arises in your body, but it is not really quite correct to say that the 'I' arises from and merges in the chest at the right side. The Heart is another name for Reality and this is neither inside nor outside the body. There can be no in or out for it, since it alone is. I do not mean by 'heart' any physiological organ or any plexus or nerves or anything like that; but so long as a man identifies himself with the body or thinks he is in the body, he is advised to see where in the body the 'I' - thought arises and merges again. It must be the heart at the right side of the chest since every man of whatever race and religion and in whatever language he may be speaking, points to the right side of the chest to indicate himself when he says 'I'. This is so all over the world, so that must be the place. And by keenly watching the emergence of the 'I' - thought on waking and its subsidence on going to sleep, one can see that it is in the heart on the right side.

When a room is dark you need a lamp to light it, but when the sun rises there is no need for a lamp; objects are seen without one. And to see the sun itself no lamp is needed because it is self-luminous. Similarly with the mind. The reflected light of the mind is necessary to perceive objects, but to see the heart it is enough for the mind to be turned towards it. Then the mind loses itself and the Heart shines forth.

Chapter II

From Theory to Practice

As was shown in the previous chapter, the theory that the Maharshi taught was intended only to serve as a basis for practice. However, the demand for practice brought in another branch of theory, that of

free-will or predestination, since people were not lacking who asked why they should make any effort if everything was predestined, or if all men returned to their Source in any case.

A visitor from Bengal said: Shankara says that we are all free, not bound, and that we shall all return to God from whom we came, like sparks from a fire. If that is so, why should we not commit all sorts of sins?

Bhagavan's reply showed him that that cannot be the point of view of the ego.

B: It is true that we are not bound. That is to say, the real Self has no bondage. And it is true that you will eventually return to your Source. But meanwhile, if you commit sins as you call them, you have to face the consequences. You cannot escape them. If a man beats you, can you say: 'I am free. I am not affected by the beating and feel no pain. Let him continue beating'? If you can really feel that, then you can do what you like, but what is the use of just saying in words that you are free?

Bhagavan did sometimes make pronouncements which seemed superficially like affirmations of complete predestination. When he left home in his youth, already established in Self-realisation, his mother sought and at last found him. He was maintaining silence at that time; therefore, on her request to return home with her, he wrote out his reply instead of replying verbally:

The Ordainer controls the fate of souls in accordance with their *prarabdha karma* (destiny to be worked out in this life, resulting from the balance sheet of actions in past lives). Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain silent.

He sometimes also made such statements to devotees.

All the activities that the body is to go through are determined when it first comes into existence. It does not rest with you to accept or reject them. The only freedom you have is to turn your mind inward and renounces activities there.

With reference to Bhagavan's reply to Mrs. Desai on the evening of January 3, 1946, I asked him: Are only the important events in a man's life, such as his main occupation or profession, predetermined, or are trifling acts also, such as taking a cup of water or moving from one part of the room to another?

B: Everything is predetermined.

I: Then what responsibility, what free will has man?

B: Why does the body come into existence? It is designed for the various things that are marked out for it in this life.... As for freedom, a man is always free not to identify himself with the body and not to be affected by the pleasures and pains consequent on its activities.

Actually, however, the question of free will or predestination does not arise at all from the point of view

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of non-duality. It is as though a group of people who had never heard of radio were to stand round a wireless set arguing whether the man in the box has to sing what the transmitting station tells him to or whether he can change parts of the songs. The answer is that there is no man in the box and therefore the question does not arise. Similarly, the answer to the question of whether the ego has free will or not is that there is no ego and therefore the question does not arise. Therefore Bhagavan's usual response to the question would be to bid the questioner find out who it is that has free will or predestination.

D: Has man any free will or is everything in his life predetermined?

The same question as above, but the answer differs according to the needs of the questioner. In fact, if one does not bear in mind what has just been said about the unreality of the ego it seems to be quite contradictory.

B: Free will exists together with the individuality. As long as the individuality lasts, so long is there free will. All the scriptures are based on this fact and advise directing the free will in the right channel.

Is this really a contradiction of the reply given earlier? No, because, according to Bhagavan's teaching, individuality has only an illusory existence. So long as one imagines that one has a separate individuality, so long does one also imagine its free will. The two exist together inevitably. The problem of predestination and free will has always plagued philosophers and theologians and will always continue to do so, because it is insoluble on the plane of duality, that is on the supposition of one being who is the Creator and a lot of other, separate omnipotent and omniscient - he does not know what will happen, because it depends on what they decide; and he cannot control all happenings because they have the power to change them. On the other hand, if he is omniscient and omnipotent he has the fore-knowledge of all that will happen and controls everything, and therefore they can have no power of decision, that is to say no free will. But on the level of advaita or non-duality the problem fades out and ceases to exist. In truth the ego has no free will, because there is no ego; but on the level of apparent reality the ego consists of free will - it is the illusion of free will that creates the illusion of the ego. That is what Bhagavan meant by saying that "as long as the individuality lasts, so long is there free will." The next sentence in his answer turns the questioner away from the theory of practice.

Find out who it is who has free will or predestination and abide in that state. Then both are transcended. That is the only purpose in discussing these questions. To whom do such questions present themselves? Discover that and be at peace.

Chapter IV

The Guru

He did not encourage curiosity and seldom answered questions about the state of the *Jnani* or the Realised Man, but when asked whether the *Jnani* continues to perform a function after the death of the body, I have heard him reply briefly that in some cases he may. Also he himself confirmed what his disciples know now from experience, that the Guru may continue to give guidance after the death of the body, when no longer in human form.

Dr. Masalavala, retired Chief Medical Officer of Bhopal, who has been here for over a month and is in temporary charge of the Asramam hospital in the absence of Dr. K. Shiva Rao, put the following questions to Bhagavan and received the following answers:

D: Bhagavan says: 'The influence of the Jnani steals into the devotee in silence'. Bhagavan also says: 'Contact with great men, exalted souls, is one efficacious means of realising one's true being.'

B: Yes. What is the contradiction? *Jnani*, great men, exalted souls - does he differentiate between them?

Thereupon I said 'no'.

B: Contact with them is good. They will work through silence. By speaking, their power is reduced. Speech is always less powerful than silence. So silent contact is the best.

D: Does the contact continue even after the dissolution of the physical body of the *Jnani* or only so long as he is in flesh and blood?

B: The Guru is not in the physical form. So contact will remain even after his physical form vanishes.

He declared that one who has obtained the grace of the Guru would never be abandoned.

He who has earned the grace of the Guru will undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the tiger's jaw will never be allowed to escape.

Remembering this, perhaps, some devotees complained, when the death of his body was imminent, that he was abandoning them and asked what they could do without his continued guidance. He answered briefly:

You attach too much importance to the body.

The implication was clear. The Guru is the same whether he wears a body or not. And his devotees have since found it to be so.

Having dealt with the need to pass from theory to practice, the possibility of practising in the conditions of the modern world without any outward observances, and the necessity for a Guru, the next two chapters will deal with the forms of practice that Bhagavan prescribed. His prescribing them openly is in itself remarkable. In their public writings and utterances the spiritual masters of all religions have dealt mainly with theory and said little or nothing about the practical discipline they enjoined. The reason for this is obvious. It is that, as Bhagavan explains in the story of the king and his minister quoted earlier in this chapter, a technique of spiritual training can be legitimately used and be effective for good only when the use of it has been authorised by one duly qualified. And yet Bhagavan himself openly expounded the methods he enjoined, both in speech and writing. Most of the books on which the present exposition is based were written and published during his lifetime, and he always showed interest in them and often recommended a questioner to turn to one of them of his answer. Even when

it became clear that the life of his body was approaching its end, he continued to show interest, in their editing and publication. Why did he permit this, when he was insistent that no technique is valid without the authorisation of the Guru? The only answer is the one given above. Physical death made no difference. If the *Mukta* can be a Guru before death, so can he also after death. He becomes no more a *Mukta* by dying. The path that had been made open by his Grace to those who turn to him was not for his lifetime only or for those few only who could approach him physically. He said:

They say that I am dying, but I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here.

TRIPURA RAHASYA

OR

THE MYSTERY BEYOND THE TRINITY

Translated by

SWAMI SRI RAMANANANDA SARASWATHI

(Sri Munagala S. Venkataramaiah)

FOREWORD

Tripura Rahasya was considered by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi as one of the greatest works that expounded advaita philosophy. He often quoted from it and regretted that it was not available in English. As a consequence Sri Munagala Venkataramaiah (now Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi) took up the work of translation in 1936 as another labour of love, adding just one more English translation to his already extensive store. This was first published in parts in the Bangalore Mythic Society's Journal (Quarterly) from January 1938 to April 1940 and afterwards collected into book form, of which five hundred copies were printed and privately circulated. The Asramam has since taken over the copyright and made it one of their official publications.

The work originally in Sanskrit is widely known in India and has been translated into a number of local languages, but I do not know of any previous translation in English. It is regarded as one of the chief text-books on Advaita, the reading of which alone is sufficient for Salvation. Sri Ananda Coomaraswami quotes from it with appreciation in his book, "Am l My Brother's Keeper?"

I for one much appreciate the present translation which will now be easily available for all who know English. Sri Ramanananda Saraswathi has put us under a great obligation by his painstaking work. It will surely be a gratification to him to know that his labour of love has at last found a permanent abiding-place and will not be lost to future generations, for many of whom it must become a spiritual text book.

October 16, 1959. Sadhu Arunachala

Sri Ramanasramam (Major A. W. Chadwick, O. B. E.)

INTRODUCTION

Sri Tripura Rahasya is an ancient work in Sanskrit which has been printed all over India. The latest and best edition was brought out in the Kashi Sanskrit Series in 1925. The book is said to have been printed once before and issued in loose leaves. There was also an edition in book form printed in Belgaum towards the end of last century.

The esteem in which the work is held for its sanctity may be gauged from an account of it given in the Preface to the Mahatmya Khanda. Mahadeva originally taught the Highest Truth to Vishnu who in turn

taught Brahma in the Celestial regions. Later Vishnu incarnated on Earth as Sri Dattatreya, the Lord of the *Avadhutas* (the naked sages), and taught it to Parasurama with the added injunction that it should be communicated to Haritayana who would later seek the Truth from him. Parasurama thus realised the Self by the guidance of Sri Datta and dwelt on the Malaya Hill in South India.

In the meantime, a Brahmin, by name Sumanta, living on the banks of the Sarasvati had a son, Alarka by name, who used to hear his mother called "जायि आयि" (Ayi) by his father. Being a child, he too addressed his mother ऐ (Ai). He died in his childhood, and his last words on his death-bed were ऐ ऐ only. This sound is however sacred to the Goddess. Having been uttered in all innocence and purity of mind, it conferred unexpected merit on the dying child. He was later born as Sumedha, a son to Harita. Haritayana is his patronymic. His spirituality developed as he grew up and he sought Parasurama to learn the highest good from him, who in turn imparted to him the knowledge which he had gained from Dattatreya. Parasurama told him also that his master had predicted the compilation of the knowledge of the Highest Truth by Haritayana for the benefit of mankind.

Haritayana was worshipping Sri Minakshi in the temple at Madurai in South India. Narada appeared to him and said that he had come from *Brahmaloka* in order to see what Haritayana was going to present to the world in the form of an *Itihasa* containing the Supreme Spiritual Truth. Haritayana was bewildered and asked how the Saint expected it of him. Narada said: "There was an assembly of saints in Brahmaloka. Markandeya asked Brahma about the Sacred Truth. Brahma said that it would be brought out by you in the form of a holy book. So I came to ask you about it." Haritayana was at a loss and pleaded inability to reproduce the Sacred Truth learned from Parasurama. Narada then meditated on Brahma who appeared before them and asked what the matter was. When Narada put the whole matter before him, he turned to Haritayana and blessed him, endowing him with the ability to produce the book at the rate of four chapters a day. He also referred to Haritayana's past and attributed his present inability to remember what he learnt to the casual and undisciplined utterance of the sacred syllable in his past incarnation. Brahma further enjoined Narada to be the first to read Haritayana's work when it should be completed.

MUNAGALA S. VENKATARAMAIAH
(now Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi)

TO
BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

A PRAYER

SALUTATIONS TO SRI RAMANA - the living monument of Eternal Truth! The direct proof of the inexpressible! May Thy Holy Feet lead me into the Sanctuary of Sri Tripura! Blessed be Thy Holy Feet! Blessed Thy Presence! Blessed Thy dear ones! Blessed all that relates to Thee!

Blest be the Mother Earth on which Thou art!
Blest be the Universe going round Thy Centre!

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Love of Manicka Vachakar personified!
Essence of Gods and sages taken shape!
Solace of the Forlorn! Refuge of the Oppressed!
Help to the Meek! Voice of the Mute!
Splendour of all! Reincarnate of the Vedas!
Hail to Thee! Thine is the Glory!
Oh, Signpost of Peace! Limit of Ananda!

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Jamadagni was a Brahmin saint who lived in the forest with his wife Renuka and his sons, of whom Parasurama was the youngest, the most valiant and the best renowned. The country was then ruled by Haihayas, a certain clan of Kshattriyas. Some of them came into a clash with Parasurama but fared the worse. They dared not challenge him afterwards. Their rancour, however, remained, and they could not resist their longing for revenge. They seized their opportunity when Parasurama was far away from the hermitage, attacked his saintly father and killed him. On the son's return, the mother narrated the unprovoked murder of the saint; she also desired that her husband's body should be cremated on the banks of the Ganges and that she might as a *Sati* mount the funeral pyre.

Parasurama vowed that he would clear the earth of the Kshattriya vermin. He placed his father's corpse on the shoulder and took his living mother on the other and set out along to the Ganges. While passing through a forest, an *Avadhutha*, by name Dattatreya, saw Renuka and stopped the young man who carried her. The *Avadhutha* addressed Renuka as Sakti incarnate, of unparalleled might (एकवीरा) and worshipped her. She blessed him and told him of her life on earth and her resolve to end it. She also advised her son to look to Dattatreya for help when needed. Parasurama went on his way and fulfilled his mother's desire.

He then challenged every Kshattriya in the land and killed them all. Their blood was collected in a pool in Kurukshetra, and Parasurama offered oblations to his forefathers with it. His dead ancestors appeared and told him to desist from his bloody revenge. Accordingly, he retired into a mountain fastness and lived as a hermit.
Hearing on one occasion of the prowess of Rama, his wrath rekindled and he came back to challenge him. Rama was born of Dasaratha who, though a Kshattriya, escaped his doom by a ruse. Rama accepted Parasurama's challenge and got the better of him.

Parasurama returned crest-fallen and on his way met an *Avadhuta* named Samvarta, the brother of Brihaspati. Later he encountered Sri Dattatreya who instructed him in *the Truth* and so led him to salvation.

DATTATREYA

There was once a dutiful wife whose husband was, however, a licentious wretch. This couple unwittingly disturbed Rishi Mandavya, who had been placed on a spear by a misguided king. The Rishi, who was in agony but not dying, cursed them, saying that the husband would die at sunrise and

the wife be left a widow. Widowhood is most abhorrent to a Hindu lady and considered worse than death. By the force of her intense loyalty to her husband she resisted the curse of the Rishi; the Sun could not rise; and the Gods were rendered impotent.

The Gods in council resolved to approach Anasuya - the ideal of wifehood - to ask her to prevail on the other lady to relent. Anasuya promised her that she would restore her dead husband to life; and so the matter ended satisfactorily for all.

The three chief Gods then agreed to be born as sons to Anasuya. Brahma was born as the Moon; Siva as Dhurvasa; and Sri Narayana as Datta. The last is also called "Datta Atreya," of which the latter word is the patronymic derived from Atri, the husband of Anasuya. Sri Dattatreya is the foremost in the line of divine teachers incarnate on earth.

TRIPURA RAHASYA

OR

THE MYSTERY BEYOND THE TRINITY

CHAPTER I

1. Salutation to *Aum* (undifferentiated Brahman, and yet the) Primal and Blissful cause, the transcendental consciousness shining as the unique mirror of the wonderful universe :

Note. - The one undifferentiated Brahman signified by *Aum* polarises as *Sat-chit-ananda* taking shape as Parameswari who, in Her crystal purity, displays the variegated phenomena which gyrate in equipoise within Her. Neutral Brahman and the polarised Brahman are thus interchangeable. The idea of the mirror implies the non-separateness of the object from the subject (conscious being).

2. Harithayana said: …

"Undisturbed you have heard, O Narada! the *Mahatmya* (The Glory) of Sri Tripura, which teaches the way to Transcendence."

Note. - Thus begins the latter part of the book; the first part deals with a narrative of Devi (Sakti-Sri Tripura), Her worship and Her grace. Tripura literally means the three cities. They are the states - *Jagrat*, *Svapna* and *Sushupti*. The undercurrent of consciousness in all of them, remaining unaffected, is metaphorically called the Resident Mistress by name Sri Tripura. The procreative faculty generating new beings and the link of altruistic love connecting the offspring to the parent are personified in the *Mother*. Hence the feminine termination of Tripura. "The way to transcendence" signifies that interest in Tripura purifies the mind and creates the zeal for enquiry into the Truth. The listener is now fit for the ensuing discourse on wisdom.

3. I shall now discourse on wisdom, which is unique because one will be permanently freed from misery, by hearing it.

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4. This is the concentrated extract of the essence of the Vedic, Vaishnava, Saiva, Sakta and Pasupata lore taken after a deep study of them all.

5-7. No other course will impress the mind so much as this one on Wisdom, which was once taught by that illustrious master Dattatreya to Parasurama. The teaching was born of his own experience, logical in sense and quite unique in its nature. One who cannot apprehend Truth even after hearing this, must be dismissed as a silly fool to be ranked among the insentient and accursed of God; Siva himself cannot make such an one gain wisdom.

8. I now proceed to relate that incomparable teaching. Listen! Oh, the lives of Sages are most sacred!

9-11. Narada too served me to learn the same from me; for, service to sages enables one to apprehend their innate kindness, just as the sense of smell helps one to detect the intrinsic odour of musk.

As Parasurama the son of Jamadagni, already pure-minded and pleasing to all, was listening to the Gospel of Tripura from the lips of Dattatreya, he became abstracted in devotion and so growing still for a time, his mind became still purer.

CHAPTER III

THE ANTECEDENT CAUSE FOR LEARNING THE GOSPEL: ASSOCIATION WITH THE WISE MUST PRECEDE "*VICHARA*"

1. Having listened to Dattatreya's words, Parasurama was delighted and continued his questions in all humility:

2. "O Bhagavan! It is precisely as my Lord Guru has just said. Truly, a man will ever head for destruction in his ignorance.

3. "His salvation lies in investigation (*vichara*) alone. The remote and proximate causes have also been mentioned by Thee, and they have been traced to *mahatmya*. I am in great doubt on this point.

4. "How does that happen and what is again its proximate cause? Can it be that it is natural (like courage to a hero)? Then why is it not shared by all?

5-6. "Why have I not got it as yet? Again, there are others who are more troubled and more suffering than I. Why have they not got this means? Kindly tell me." Thus asked, Datta, the Ocean of Mercy, answered:

7. "Listen, Rama! I shall now tell you the fundamental cause of salvation. *Association with the wise* is the root cause for obliterating all misery.

8-9. "Association with the sages is alone said to lead to the highest good. Your contact with Samvarta has led you to this stage of enlightenment, which is the forerunner of emancipation. On being

approached, the sages teach the greatest good.

10. “Has anyone ever got anything great, without contact with the wise? In any case, it is the company which determines the future of the individual.

11. “A man undoubtedly reaps the fruits of his company. I shall relate to you a story to illustrate this:

CHAPTER IV

DISGUST FOR WORLDLY ENJOYMENTS IS INCULCATED SO THAT DISPASSION MIGHT BE DEVELOPED

1-3. “On hearing the sweet words of her infatuated lover, who was all the time pressing her to his bosom, that stainless girl, wishing to teach him, smiled gently and spoke with good sense as follows; ‘Listen to me, O Prince. It is not that I do not love you, only that I am trying to find what the greatest joy in life is which will never become distasteful. I am always searching for it, but have not attained it as yet.

4. ‘Though always looking for it, I have not reached any definite decision, as is a woman’s way. Will you not kindly tell me what exactly it is and so help me?’

5. “Being thus coaxed, Hemachuda laughed derisively and told his beloved; ‘Women are indeed silly.’

6-8. “For do not even the birds and beasts, nay the crawling insects know what is good and what is bad? Otherwise, how are they guided in the pursuit of good, and how do they escape from bad? That which is pleasing is clearly good and that which is not so, is bad. What is there in it, my dear, that you are always given to thinking about it? Is it not silly?” Hearing her lover speak thus, Hemalekha continued;

9. “True that women are silly and cannot judge rightly. Therefore should I be taught by you, the right discerner.

10. “On being rightly taught by you, I shall stop thinking like that. Also, I shall then be able to share in your pleasures to your entire satisfaction.

11. “O King, subtle judge that you are, you have found happiness and misery to be the results of what is pleasing or otherwise.

12. “The same object yields pleasure or pain according to circumstances. Where is then the finality in your statement?

CHAPTER V

ON BONDAGE AND RELEASE

1. Parasurama, on hearing the master's discourse on the greatness of *satsanga*, was highly pleased and continued to ask.

2. "You have truly said, O Lord, that *satsanga* is the harbinger of all that is worthy, and illustrated the fact with a story.

3. "One's enjoyments are determined by the quality of one's company. The highest good was accomplished by all owing to their association direct or indirect, with Hemalekha, though she was only a woman.

4. "I am anxious to hear how Hemachuda was further guided by her. Please tell me, Thou Lord of Mercy!"

5. Thus requested, Dattatreya said to Parasurama: "Listen, O Bhargava, I shall now continue the holy narrative.

6. "Having heard what she had to say, the enjoyments ceased to interest him, he developed a disgust for them, and became pensive.

7. "But the force of habit still remained with him. He was therefore unable either to enjoy himself or to desist all of a sudden.

8. "He was however too proud to confess his weakness to his beloved. Some time passed in this way.

9. "When his habits forced him into the old ways he was still mindful of his wife's words, so that he engaged himself in them with reluctance and shame.

10-11. "He repeatedly fell into his old ways by force of habit; and very often he became repentant, realising the evil of those ways and remembering his wife's wise words. His mind was thus moving to and fro, like a swing.

12. "Neither delicious foods, nor fine clothes, nor rich jewels, nor charming damsels nor caparisoned horses, nor even his dear friends continued to interest him.

CHAPTER VI

ON THE MERITS OF FAITH FOR GAINING THE GOAL AND ON THE HARMFULNESS OF DRY POLEMICS

1. Hemachuda was astonished at the fantastic tale of his beloved. Being ignorant, he smiled derisively at the tale and asked that wise princess:

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2. “My dear, what you have been saying seems to be nothing but invention. Your words have no relation to facts and are altogether meaningless.

3. “You are certainly the daughter of an *Apsaras* (celestial damsel), and brought up by Rishi Vyagrapada in the forest; you are still young and not yet fully grown.

4. “But you talk as if you were several generations old. Your long-winded speech is like that of a girl possessed and not in her senses.

5. “I cannot believe that rigmarole. Tell me where your companion is and who is the son she killed.

6. “Where are those cities? What is the significance of your story? Where is your friend?

7. “I know nothing of your lady-in-waiting. You may ask my mother if you like. There is no other lady besides your mother-in-law in my father’s place.

8. “Tell me quickly where such a lady is to be found and where her son’s sons are. I think your tale is a myth like the tale of a barren woman’s son.

9-11. “A clown once related a story that a barren woman’s son mounted a chariot reflected in a mirror and decorated with silver taken from the sheen of mother-of-pearl, armed himself with weapons made of human horn, fought in the battlefield of the sky, killed the future king, subdued the city of aerial hosts and enjoyed himself with dream maidens on the banks of the waters of a mirage.

CHAPTER VII

THAT THE GOAL IS GAINED ONLY AFTER ASCERTAINING GOD BY FAITH, EFFORT AND APPROVED LOGIC, AND DEVOTION TO HIM

1. When Hemalekha was thus asked by her husband, she with her saintly practical knowledge of the state of the universe, spoke to him with increased kindness:

2-5. “Dearest, listen to me attentively. What is known as the mind is, after all, always like a restless monkey. So the ordinary man is always afflicted with troubles. Everybody knows that a restless mind is the channel of endless troubles; whereas one is happy in sleep in the absence of such restlessness. Therefore keep your mind steady when you listen to what I say. Hearing with a distracted mind is as good as not hearing, for the words serve no useful purpose, resembling the fruit-laden tree seen in a painting.

6. “Man is quickly benefited if he turns away from dry, ruinous logic and engages in purposeful discussion.

7. "Appropriate effort must follow right discussion; for a man profits according to the zeal accompanying his efforts.

8. "You find, my dear, that aimless discussions are fruitless and that earnest efforts are fruitful in the world.

9. "Discriminating zeal is what enables the husbandman to plough the field in season and the assayer to assay the worth of gold, silver, precious stones, medicinal herbs and the rest. No practical work will be done if people spend all their lives in vain discussions alone. Therefore, one should discard aimless talk and begin immediately to accomplish the highest aim of life as ascertained by appropriate sincere discussion. Nor should one refrain from individual effort, as is the wont of the followers of Soonga.

12. "A man who is in earnest need never be at a loss; will sustained effort ever fail in its purpose?

CHAPTER IX

HOW THAT HEMACHUDA REALISED THE SELF AFTER ANALYSING HIS OWN MIND AND PLUNGING WITHIN

1. When Hemachuda understood the significance of his wife's parable he was agreeably surprised. His voice choked with pleasure as he said to her:

2. "My dear, You are indeed blessed, and clever too; how shall I describe the profound wisdom of the story of your life, narrated to me in the form of a parable.

3. "Up to now I did not know your progress. It has all been made as clear to me as a gooseberry resting on the palm of my hand.

4-5. "I now understand the end of humanity and realise our wonderful nature. Please tell me further now; who is this mother of yours? How is she without beginning? Who are we? What is our real nature?"

Asked thus, Hemalekha told her husband:

6. "Lord, listen carefully to what I am going to say, for it is subtle. Investigate the nature of the Self with intellect made transparently clear.

7. "It is not an object to be perceived, nor described; how shall I then tell you of it? You know the mother only if you know the Self.

8. "The Self does not admit of specification, and therefore no teacher can teach it. However, realise the Self within you, for it abides in unblemished intellect.

9. "It pervades all, beginning from the personal God to the amoeba; but it is not cognisable by the mind or senses; being itself unillumined by external agencies, it illumines all, everywhere and always.

It surpasses demonstration or discussion.

10. “How, where, when, or by whom has it been specifically described even incompletely? What you ask me, dear, amounts to asking me to show your eyes to you.

CHAPTER X

ON FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS BY HIS BELOVED, HE GOT SAMADHI IN SPITE OF HIS EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES AND REMAINED IN THE STATE OF EMANCIPATION EVEN WHILE ALIVE

1-5. “Hemalekha noticed that her husband had attained supreme Peace and so did not disturb him. He awoke in an hour and a half, opened his eyes and saw his wife nearby. Eager to fall into that state once more, he closed his eyes; and immediately Hemalekha took hold of his hands and asked him sweetly: ‘My Lord, tell me what you have ascertained to be your gain on closing your eyes, or your loss on opening them, my dearest. I love to hear you. Do say what happens on the eyes being closed or left open.’

6. “On being pressed for an answer, he looked as if he were drunk and replied reluctantly and languidly, as follows:

7-14. “My dear, I have found pure untainted happiness. I cannot find the least satisfaction in the activities of the world as sorrow increases when they finish. Enough of them! They are tasteless to me like a sucked orange, only indulged in by wasters, or like cattle incessantly chewing the cud. What a pity that such people should be to this day unaware of the bliss of their own Self! Just as a man goes a-begging in ignorance of the treasure hidden under his floor, so did I run after sensual pleasures unaware of the boundless ocean of bliss within me. Worldly pursuits are laden with misery, and pleasures are transient. Still I was so infatuated that I mistook them for enduring pleasures, was often grief-stricken, yet did not cease to pursue them over and over again. The pity of it: Men are fools, unable to discriminate pleasure from pain. They seek pleasures but gain sorrow. Enough of these activities which increase the relish for such pleasure.

“My dear, I beg you with hands clasped. Let me fall again into the peace of my blissful self. I pity you that though knowing this state, you are not in it but are ever engaged in vain.”

CHAPTER XI

THAT THE COSMOS IS NOT OTHER THAN INTELLIGENCE

1. After he had listened to this sublime story of Hemachuda, Bhargava was confused and asked:

2-5. “Lord, my Master! What you have related as a wonderful teaching appears to me against the experience of all people in every way. How can the magnificent, objective universe be no other than tenuous consciousness, which is not seen, but only inferred? Pure intelligence devoid of known objects cannot be imagined and therefore cannot be postulated. Thus the whole theme based on it is

not at all clear to me. I pray you kindly to elucidate the subject so that I may understand it." Thus requested, Dattatreya continued:

6-30. "I will now tell you the truth of the objective world, as it is. What is seen is absolutely nothing but sight. I shall now give you the proof of this statement. Listen with attention. All that is seen has an origin and there must therefore be an antecedent cause for it. What is origin except that the thing newly appears? The world is changing every moment and its appearance is new every moment and so it is born every moment. Some say that the birth of the universe is infinite and eternal each moment. Some may contest the point saying that the statement is true of a specific object or objects but not of the world which is the aggregate of all that is seen. The scholiasts of *Vijnana* answer them thus: The external phenomena are only momentary projections of the anamnesis of the continuous link, namely, the subject and the worldly actions are based on them. But the intellect which collates time, space and phenomena is infinite and eternal at each moment of their appearance and it is called *Vijnana* by them. Others say that the universe is the aggregate of matter - mobile and immobile. (The atomists maintain that the universe is made up of five elements, earth, air, fire, water and ether which are permanent and of things like a pot, a cloth, etc., which are transient. They are still unable to prove the external existence of the world, because they admit that happenings in life imply their conceptual nature. It follows that the objects not so involved are useless.)

"But all are agreed that the universe has an origin. (What is then the point in saying that the momentary creations are eternal and infinite? The momentary nature cannot be modified by the qualifications mentioned. There is no use in dressing a condemned man before the executioner's axe is laid on him.) To say however that creation is due to nature (accidental?) is to over-stretch the imagination and therefore unwarranted. The Charvakas, nihilists, argue that some effects are not traceable to their efficient causes. There are occurrences without any antecedent causes. Just as a cause need not always foretell an event, so also the event need not always have a cause. The conclusion follows that the world is an accident.

"If a thing can appear without a cause there is no relation between cause and effect, and there can be no harmony in the world. A potter's work may lead to a weaver's products, and *vice versa*, which is absurd. The interdependence of cause and effect is ascertained by their logical sequence and proved by its role in practical life. How then can the universe be an accident?

"They infer the cause where it is not obvious, and trace the cause from the effect. This conforms to the universal practice. Each occurrence must have a cause for it; that is the rule. Even if the cause is not obvious, it must be inferred; otherwise the world activities would be in vain - which is absurd. The conclusion is then reached that every event is a product of a certain condition or conditions; and this fact enables people to engage in purposeful work. So it is in the practical world. Therefore the theory of accidental creation is not admissible.

"The atomists premise a material cause for creation and name it *imponderable atoms*. According to them, the imponderable atoms produce the tangible world, which did not exist before creation and will not remain after dissolution. (The existence of the world before or after is only imaginary and untrue, like a human horn - they say.) How can the same thing be true at one time and untrue at another? Again if the primary atoms are imponderable, without magnitude and yet are permanent,

how can they give rise to material and transient products endowed with magnitude?

"How can the same thing be yellow and not yellow - bright and dark - at the same time? These qualities are not in harmony; the whole theory is confused, it is as if one were trying to mix up the immiscibles. Again, how did the primordial atoms begin to unite to produce diatoms or triatoms? Was it of their own accord? (which is impossible because, they are insentient) or by God's will? (Then the action is God's and not of the atoms. Otherwise it would be like a king in his palace who, by merely willing to kill the enemy, sent his weapons flying about in the act of destruction). (It has already been pointed out that God cannot be supposed to operate atoms for the purpose of creation, as a potter does with clay.)

Note:- Thus the idea of the beginning of creation is altogether refuted.

"It is also absurd to say that the insentient atoms of matter began creation when the equilibrium of the three forces *Satva, Rajas* and *Tamas*, was disturbed. (One of the systems of philosophy believes that three qualities, brightness, activity and darkness, are always there in equilibrium. When disturbed, creation begins; when they revert to equilibrium, the universe is dissolved.) How are the changes in the state of equilibrium brought about? Change is not possible without an intelligent cause. So none of the systems can satisfactorily account for creation. Scriptures alone are the guide for comprehending the metaphysical and the transcendental. The rest are not authoritative because of the individual's limitations, the absence of reliable tests for their accuracy, and of the repeated failures of attempts which ignore God. The universe must have a Creator, and He must be an intelligent principle, but He cannot be of any known type because of the vastness of the creation. His power is past understanding and is dealt with in the Scriptures, whose authority is incontrovertible. They speak of the unique Creator, the Lord who was before creation, being self-contained. He created the universe by His own power. It is in its entirety and all its details, a picture on the screen of His Self like the dream world on the individual consciousness. The individual encompasses his own creation with his ego (as 'I'); so does the Lord play with the universe. Just as the dreamer is not to be confounded with the dream so is the Lord not to be confounded with the creation. Just as a man survives his dream, so does the Lord survive the dissolution of His creation. Just as you remain ever as pure consciousness apart from the body, etc., so is the Lord, unbounded consciousness apart from the universe, etc. Is it not after all only a picture drawn by Him on His Self? How can this unique creation be apart from Him? There can indeed be nothing but consciousness. Tell me of any place where there is no consciousness; there is no place beyond consciousness. Or can anyone prove in any manner anything outside consciousness? Consciousness is inescapable.

CHAPTER XII

THE APPEARANCE OF THE REALITY OF THE UNIVERSE DEPENDS ON THE STRENGTH OF WILL OF CREATION

1. Even after listening to Dattatreya patiently, Parasurama was still perplexed and asked:

2. "O Lord, what you have said so far about the Universe is the truth.

3. "Even so, how is it that it appears to be real to me and to others who are both intelligent and shrewd?

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4. “Why does it continue to seem to be real to me even though I have heard you say otherwise? Please prove to me its unreality and remove my present illusion.”

5. Thus requested, Dattatreya, the great sage, began to explain the cause of the illusion which makes one believe the world to be real.

6. “Listen, Rama! This illusion is very old, being no other than the deep-rooted ignorance which mistakes one thing for another.

7. “See how the true Self has been ignored and the body has become identified with the Self. Consider this foul body comprised of blood and bones beside that unblemished, pure intelligence!

8. “Even the gross body becomes mistaken for crystal-clear consciousness by mere force of habit.

9. “So also the universe has repeatedly been taken to be real so that it now looks as if it were actually real. The remedy lies in a change of outlook.

10. “The world becomes for one whatever one is accustomed to think it. This is borne out by the realisation of *yogis* of the objects of their long contemplation.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW THE UNIVERSE IS MERE IMAGINATION; HOW TO GAIN THAT STRONG WILL WHICH CAN CREATE IT; AND THE HIGHEST TRUTH

1-6. Having heard the sage’s son, Mahasena began to think clearly and seriously; he concluded the world to be dream-like and overcame his grief. Growing strong in mind, he was not perturbed. Then he asked his companion:

“Great and wise saint! You know this world and beyond. I do not believe that there is anything that you do not know. Please answer me now: How can you say that the whole is pure imagination? However much I may imagine, my imagination does not materialise. But you have created a universe by the force of your will. And yet, how do time and space differ in these creations? Please tell me.” On being thus asked, the sage’s son replied:

7. “The will conceives either effectively or ineffectively according as it is uniform or broken up by indecision.

8. “Do you not know this world to be the result of Brahma’s desire? This looks real and permanent because the original desire is so powerful.

9. “Whereas the world of your creation no one takes seriously, and your own mistrust makes it useless.

10-15. “Conceptions materialise for various reasons as follows: by virtue of the natural function as with Brahma the Creator; by the possession of live-gems as with *Yakshas* and *Rakshasas* (classes of celestial beings); by the use of herbs as with Gods (nectar is reputed to contain the extracts of superb herbs); by the practice of *yoga* as with yogis; by the miraculous power of incantations as with a few *siddhas*; by the force of penance as with some sages; and by virtue of boons as with the Architect of the universe (*Viswakarma*).

“One should forget the old associations in order to make one’s new conception effective and this endures only so long as it is not obstructed by the old one. A conception is forceful unless obstructed by an antecedent one and thus destroyed. It is effective only when forceful; in that way even great things may be achieved.

CHAPTER XV

ON WHAT NEED BE KNOWN AND NEED NOT BE KNOWN AND ON THE NATURE OF THE SELF

1. On hearing Dattatreya relate the wonderful story of the Hill City, Parasurama marvelled more and more.

2. He, with a clear mind, pondered over the teachings of his Master, and then returned to him and asked him again:-

3. “Lord, I have considered the purport of your teachings in the shape of the magnificent stories you told me.

4. “I understand that intelligence alone is real and single, and that objects are only unreal images like a city reflected in a mirror.

5. “Her Transcendental Majesty, the Mahesvari, is that consciousness manifesting as Intelligence cognisant of the whole range of phenomena, beginning from the unmanifest state of sleep and ending with this world passing in quick succession within itself.

6. “All these are apparently due to the self-sufficiency of that consciousness and they come into being without any immediate cause. This much I have understood after deep consideration.

7. “But this intelligence is said to be beyond cognition because it always remains as pure knowledge itself.

8. “I do not see how it can be realised if it surpasses knowledge. The goal is not achieved without realising it.

9. “The goal is liberation. What is its nature? If one can be liberated while alive, how is the course of his emancipated life regulated, if that is at all possible?

10. "There are sages who are active. What is the relation between the world of action and their pure conscious being?

11. "How can they engage in action while all the time they inhere in absolute consciousness? Such consciousness can be of only one kind, and liberation also can be only one in order to be effective.

CHAPTER XVI

ON CONSCIOUSNESS; CONTROL OF MIND; AND SLEEP

1. When Parasurama had heard the story, he marvelled greatly and requested his Master to continue:

2-5. "Lord, this ancient legend is marvellous. Please tell me what Ashtavakra asked the king next, and the instructions he received. I had not hitherto heard this story full of sublime truths. Please continue the story. Master, I am anxious to hear it in full."
Being so requested, Dattatreya, the great sage and Master, continued the holy narrative. "Listen, O Bhargava, to the discourse with Janaka.

6-7. "On the departure of the holy ascetic from vision, Ashtavakra, the son of a sage, asked Janaka who was surrounded by a whole group of pandits, the full explanation of the ascetic's brief but recondite speech. I shall now tell you Janaka's reply, to which listen attentively.

8-9. "Ashtavakra asked, 'O King of Videha, I have not clearly understood the teaching of the ascetic because of its brevity. Please explain to me then, Lord of mercy, how I shall know the unknowable'.

Being thus asked, Janaka, as if surprised, replied:

10-13. "O thou son of a sage, listen to me! It is neither unknowable nor remains unknown at any moment. Tell me how even the ablest of Masters can guide one to something which always remains unknown. If a Guru can teach, it means that he knows what he says. This transcendental state is quite easy or may be well-nigh impossible according as one's mind is inward bent in peace or out moving in restlessness. It cannot be taught if it always remains unknown.

CHAPTER XVII

ON THE USELESSNESS OF FLEETING SAMADHIS AND THE WAY TO WISDOM

1. "O Bhargava! I shall now tell you what further conversation took place between Janaka and Ashtavakra."

2-3. Ashtavakra asked, "King! please tell me in greater detail what you call fleeting *Samadhi* in the wakeful state, so that I may follow it up in order to achieve enduring *Samadhi*."

Thus requested, Janaka replied:

4-11. "Listen, O Brahmin! the following are instances of that state: When a man remains unaware of 'in and out' for a short interval and is not overpowered by the ignorance of sleep; the infinitesimal time when one is beside oneself with joy; when embraced by one's beloved in all purity; when a thing is gained which was intensely longed for but given up in despair; when a lonely traveller moving with the utmost confidence is suddenly confronted with the utmost danger; when one hears of the sudden death of one's only son, who was in the best of health, in the prime of life, and at the apex of his glory.

Note:- They are examples of *Samadhi* in raptures of happiness or of pleasure and in spasms of fear or of sorrow.

12-14. "There are also intervals of *Samadhi*, namely the interim period between the waking, dream and sleep states; at the time of sighting a distant object, the mind holding the body at one end projects itself into space until it holds the object at the other end, just as a worm prolongs itself at the time of leaving one hold to catch another hold. Carefully watch the state of mind in the interval.

15-18. "Why dilate on these intervals? All happening will be brought to a standstill if intelligence be homogeneous. They are made possible when a certain harmony reigns in intelligence which ordinarily is repeatedly broken.

"Therefore the great founders of different systems of philosophy have said that the difference between the Self (*i.e.*, abstract intelligence) and intellect (individualistic) lies only in their continuity. Sugata (*i.e.*, Buddha) considers the Self to be the stream of Intelligence broken up, of course, at short intervals; Kanada says that it is intellect which is characteristic of the Self.

"Anyway when once interruptions in the stream of Intelligence are admitted, it follows that these intervals between the various modifications of the intellect into objects, would represent its unmodified, original state. O son of Kahoela, know that if one can become aware of these broken *Samadhis* no other *Samadhi* need attract one."

19-23. The Brahmin youth asked further, "O King, why are not all liberated if their lives are so iridescent with momentary *Samadhi*, if it be the enlightener of the unmanifest void in sleep? Liberation is the direct result of unqualified *Samadhi*. The Self being pure intelligence, why does it not recognise itself and remain always liberated?

"Ignorance is dispelled by pure intelligence, which is *Samadhi*, and this is the immediate cause of salvation.

"Please tell me, so that all my doubts may be set at rest."

The King replied as follows:

24-26. "I will tell you the secret. The cycle of births and deaths is from time immemorial caused by

ignorance which displays itself as pleasure and pain and yet is only a dream and unreal. Being so, the wise say that it can be ended by knowledge. By what kind of knowledge? Wisdom born of realisation (*viz*., 'I am That').

Commentary:- An aspirant for wisdom first turns away from the pleasures of life and absorbs himself in the search for knowledge, which he learns from a master. This is hearsay knowledge. In order to experience it, he ponders over it and clears his doubts. Then he applies the knowledge to himself and tries to feel his immortal being transcending the body, mind, etc., he succeeds in feeling his Self within. Later he remembers the Vedic teaching imparted by his Guru that the Self being unqualified, cannot be differentiated from God and experiences his unity with the Universal Self. This is in short the course of wisdom and liberation.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. Dattatreya continued: "Thus pure intelligence, free from objective knowledge, has been proved to exist; it can be felt on many occasions in ordinary life.

2. "However, it goes undetected because people are in the meshes of *Maya* and not conversant with it. Alertness alone will reveal it.

3-5. "Why say so much about it? The long and short of it is this. Objective knowledge is gained by the mind; the mind cannot be objectified. Still it follows that there must be mind even in the absence of objects. Such pure mind entirely divested of all objective knowledge (or thoughts) is pure intelligence. Awareness is its nature. Therefore it is always realised, for no other knower beside itself can ever be admitted.

6-7. "Do you think, O Bhargava, that the Self is not aware when objects are seen? If not aware, the Self cannot be. If the Self is not, how can you raise this question! Can you seek any good for yourself if the Self be a myth like a flower in the sky? How can I establish the Self for you? Consider and tell me.

8-9. "Or do you mean to say that there is ordinarily an awareness of the Self but it cannot be particularised? If so, know it to be the unending awareness which is perpetually existing. That is your Self. The Self is free from particulars. How strange that knowing it, you are still ignorant!

10. "At the time of cognising of an object, the pure intellect assumes its shape and manifests as such. Of itself it is pure and has no form. Objective knowledge is thus a particularised section of pure intelligence. The Self is ever-shining, unparticularized, unblemished, ordinary existence - self-aware and self-sufficient.

CHAPTER XIX

1. After having heard Sri Dattatreya say so, Parasurama asked him further regarding the conduct and activities of the *jnanis*.

2-4. "Lord, please tell me clearly how intellects differ according to the stages of *jnana* (wisdom). Is not wisdom of one kind alone, being simply the revelation of the Self? *Moksha* (emancipation) is the

simple unfolding of the Self and is alone to be sought. How can it be dependent on stages of development according to mental predispositions? Do the methods also differ in the same way?"

5. Thus asked again, Sri Datta, the Ocean of Mercy, began to answer his questions.

6. "I shall now tell you the secret of it all. There is no difference in the methods, nor does *jnana* differ in fact.

7. "The fruits differ according to the grades of accomplishment. The same extends through several births and on its completion, *jnana* easily unfolds itself.

8. "The degree of efforts is according to the stage of incompleteness brought over from past births. However, *jnana* is eternal and no effort is really needed.

9. "Because it is already there and needs no accomplishment, *jnana* is pure intelligence, the same as consciousness which is ever self-radiant.

10-13. "What kind of effort can avail to disclose the eternally self-resplendent consciousness? Being coated with a thick crust of infinite *vasanas* (dispositions), it is not easily perceived. The encrustation must first be soaked in the running steam of mind control and carefully scraped off with the sharp chisel of investigation. Then one must turn the closed urn of crystal quartz - namely, the mind cleaned in the aforesaid manner - on the grinding wheel of alertness and finally open the lid with the lever of discrimination.

CHAPTER XX

VIDYA GITA

1-20. "I shall now relate to you an ancient sacred story. On one occasion very long ago there was a very distinguished gathering of holy saints collected in the abode of Brahma, the Creator, when a very subtle and sublime disputation took place. Among those present were Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata, Vasishta, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Brighu, Atri, Angiras, Pracheta, Narada, Chyavana, Vamadeva, Visvamitra, Gautama, Suka, Parasara, Vyasa, Kanva, Kasyapa, Daksha, Sumanta, Sanka, Likhita, Devala and other celestial and royal sages. Each one of them spoke of his own system with courage and conviction and maintained that it was better than all the rest. But they could reach no conclusion and so asked Brahma: 'Lord! We are sages who know all about the world and beyond, but each one's way of life differs from that of the others because the dispositions of our minds differ. Some of us are always in *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, some engaged in philosophical discussions, some sunk in devotion, some have taken to work, and others seem exactly like men of the world. Which is the best among us? Please tell us. We cannot decide ourselves because each thinks that his way is the best.'

"Thus requested, Brahma seeing their perplexity answered: 'Best of saints! I also would like to know. There is Parameswara who is the All-knower. Let us go and ask him.' Collecting Vishnu on

their way, they went to Siva. There the leader of the deputation, Brahma, asked Siva about the matter. Having heard Brahma, Siva divined the mind of Brahma and understood that the *rishis* were wanting in confidence and so that any words of his would be useless. He then said to them, 'Hear me, *Rishis*! Neither do I clearly see which is the method. Let us meditate on the Goddess - Her Majesty Unconditioned Knowledge - we shall then be able to understand even the subtlest of truths by Her Grace.' On hearing these words of Siva, all of them, including Siva, Vishnu and Brahma, meditated on Her Divine Majesty, the Transcendental Consciousness pervading the three states of life (waking, dream and sleep). Thus invoked, She manifested in Her glory as the Transcendental Voice in the expanse of pure consciousness.

"They heard the Voice speak like thunder from the skies, 'Speak out your minds, O *Rishis*! Be quick, the desires of my devotees will always be fulfilled immediately.'

21-28. "Hearing the Voice, the exalted *rishis* prostrated and Brahma and the others praised the Goddess - namely Absolute Consciousness pervading the three states of life.

"Salutations to Thee! the Greatest! the Best! the Most Auspicious! the Absolute Knowledge! the Consciousness of the three states! the Creatrix! the Protectress! the Dissolver in the Self! the Supreme One transcending all! Salutations again!

"There was no time when Thou wert not, because Thou art unborn! Thou art ever fresh and hence Thou never growest old. Thou art all; the essence of all, the knower of all, the delighter of all. Thou art not all. Thou art nowhere, with no core in Thee, unaware of anything, and delighting no one.

"O Supreme Being! Salutations to Thee, over and over again, before and behind, above and below, on all sides and everywhere.

"Kindly tell us of Thy relative form and Thy transcendental state, Thy prowess, and Thy identity with *jnana*. What is the proper and perfect means for attaining Thee, the nature and the result of such attainment? What is the utmost finality of accomplishment, beyond which there remains nothing to be accomplished? Who is the best among the accomplished sages? Salutations again to Thee!

29. "Thus besought, the Goddess of ultimate knowledge began with great kindness to explain it clearly to the sages:

30. "Listen, sages! I shall categorically explain to you all that you ask. I shall give you the nectar drawn out as the essence from the unending accumulation of sacred literature.

31-40. "I am the abstract intelligence wherefrom the cosmos originates, whereon it flourishes, and wherein it resolves, like the images in a mirror. The ignorant know me as the gross universe, whereas the wise feel me as their own pure being eternally glowing as 'I-I' within. This realisation is possible only in the deep stillness of thought-free consciousness similar to that of the deep sea free from waves. The most earnest of devotees worship me spontaneously and with the greatest sincerity which is due to their love of me. Although they know that I am their own non-dual Self, yet the habit of

loving devotion which is deep-rooted in them makes them conceive their own Self as ME and worship ME as the life-current pervading their bodies, senses and mind, without which nothing could exist and which forms the sole purport of the holy scriptures. Such is my Transcendental State.

“My concrete form is the eternal couple - the Supreme Lord and Energy - always in undivided union and abiding as the eternal consciousness pervading the three phenomenal states of waking, dream and sleep, and reclining on the cot whose four legs are Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Protector), Siva (the Destroyer) and Isvara (Disappearance) and whose surface is Sadasiva (Grace) which is contained in the mansion known as ‘fulfilment of purpose’ enclosed by the garden of ‘*kadamba*’ trees in the jewel island situated in the wide ocean of nectar surrounding the cosmos and extending beyond.

“Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Isvara, Sadasiva, Ganesa, Skanda, the gods of the eight quarters, their energies, other gods, celestials, serpents and other superhuman beings are all manifestations of myself. However, people do not know ME because their intellect is shrouded in ignorance.

41. “I grant boons to those who worship ME. There is no one besides ME worthy of worship or capable of fulfilling all desires.

Commentary:- All deities who receive worship and all conceptions of God are My manifestations, because I am pure intelligence which cannot under any circumstances be transcended.

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF WISDOM, ITS NATURE AND SCRIPTURAL LORE

1. After Parasurama heard this from Sri Dattatreya he felt as if released from the meshes of ignorance.

2-8. He again saluted Sri Datta and asked him with great devotion: “Lord! please tell me exactly how wisdom can be accomplished. I want to hear the essence of it in brief. The method should also be easy and at the same time efficient. Please also tell me the characteristics of the sages, so that I may readily recognise them. What is their state with or without the body? How can they be unattached though active? Kindly tell me all this.”

Thus requested, the son of Atri spoke to him with pleasure: “Listen! Rama, I am now telling you the secret of accomplishment. Of all the requisites for wisdom, Divine Grace is the most important. He who has entirely surrendered himself to the Goddess of his own Self is sure to gain wisdom readily. Rama! this is the best of all the methods.

9-17. “This method does not require other aids to reinforce its efficiency, as other methods do for accomplishing the end. There is a reason for it. Pure Intelligence illumining all has cast a veil of ignorance of Her own over all. Her true nature is evident only after removing this veil by discrimination. This is hard for those whose minds are directed outward; and it is easy, sure and quick for devotees engrossed in the Goddess of the Self to the exclusion of all else.

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"An intense devotee, though endowed with only a little discipline of other kinds (*e.g.*, dispassion), can readily understand the truth though only theoretically, and expound it to others. Such exposition helps him to imbue those ideas and so he absorbs the truth. This ultimately leads him to identify all individuals with Siva and he is no longer affected by pleasure or pain. All-round identification with Siva makes him the best of *jnanis* and a *jivanmukta* (emancipated here and now). Therefore *bhakti yoga* (way of devotion) is the best of all and excels all else.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CONCLUSION

1-4. After Sri Dattatreya had finished, Parasurama asked again respectfully: "Lord, what further did that Brahmin ask Hemangada and how did the latter enlighten him? The account is very interesting and I desire to hear it in full." Then Sri Datta, the Lord of Mercy, continued the story: Vasuman asked Hemangada as follows:-

5-8. "Prince! I shall ask you a question. Please answer me. I learnt about the Supreme Truth from Ashtaka and later from you. You are a sage; but still, how is it that you go out hunting? How can a sage be engaged in work? Work implies duality; wisdom is non-duality; the two are thus opposed to each other. Please clear this doubt of mine."

Thus requested, Hemangada told the Brahmin as follows:-

9-14. "O Brahmin! Your confusion owing to ignorance has not yet been cleared up. Wisdom is eternal and natural. How can it be contradicted by work? Should work make wisdom ineffective, how can wisdom be useful any more than a dream? No eternal good is possible in that case. All this work is dependent on Self-awareness (*i.e.*, wisdom). Being so, can work destroy wisdom and yet remain in its absence? Wisdom is that consciousness in which this world with all its phenomena and activities is known to be as an image or series of images; duality essential for work is also a phenomenon in that non-dual awareness.

"There is no doubt that a man realises the Self only after purging himself of all thoughts, and that he is then released from bondage, once for all. Your question has thus no basis and cannot be expected of the wise,"

Then the Brahmin continued further:

15-16. "True, O Prince! I have also concluded that the Self is pure, unblemished Intelligence. But how can it remain unblemished when *will* arises in it? *Will* is modification of the Self, giving rise to confusion similar to that of a snake in a coil of rope."

Thus ends the concluding Chapter in the most Sacred *Itihasa Tripura Rahasya*.

YOGA VASISHTA SARA

(THE ESSENCE OF YOGA VASISHTA)

An English Translation from the Sanskrit Original

PREFACE

This English version of the *Yoga Vasishta Sara* is based on a translation made by Swami Sureshananda, an old devotee of Bhagavan, who has founded an ashram named Vijnana Ramaneeyam at Palghat and has translated several works of Bhagavan as well as the *Yoga Vasishta Sara* into Malayalam. This was published serially in *The Mountain Path*, the journal published by Sri Ramanasramam, during 1969 to 1971 and is now issued in the form of a book for facility of reference.

V. S. Ramanan
President, Board of trustees
Sri Ramanasramam

INTRODUCTION

The Brihat (the great) *Yoga Vasishta* or *Yoga Vasishta Maha Ramayana* as it is also called, is a work of about 32,000 Sanskrit couplets, traditionally attributed to Valmiki, the author of Srimad Ramayana. It is a dialogue between Sage Vasishta and Sri Rama, during which *Advaita* (the doctrine of non-duality) in its pure form of *ajatavada* (theory of non-origination) is expounded, with illustrative stories in between. This vast work was abridged some centuries ago by Abhinanda Pandita, a Kashmiri scholar, into 6,000 couplets, which go by the name of *Laghu Yoga Vasishta*. This is a masterpiece in itself, like the original Brihat.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi used to refer to *Yoga Vasishta* frequently and has even incorporated six couplets from it in His *Supplement to Forty Verses* (verses 21 to 27) .

A further condensation of this work was made long ago, by an unknown author, into about 230 couplets, divided into ten chapters, as *Yoga Vasishta Sara* (Essence of *Yoga Vasishta*), of which this translation is presented for the first time. By making this condensation the author has rendered a great service to all sadhaks. This is indeed a gold mine fit for repeated reading and meditation.

PUBLISHER

Note: An English translation of the *Brihat Yoga Vasishta* by Vihari Lal Mitra is out of print. Translation of *Laghu Yoga Vasishta* by K. Narayanaswamy Iyer is available from the Theosophical Publishing House, Madras-20.

CHAPTER ONE

DISPASSION

1. Salutations to that calm effulgence which is endless and unlimited by space, time etc., the pure consciousness which can be known by experience only.

5. The great remedy for the long-lasting disease of samsara is the enquiry, 'Who am I?, to whom does this samsara belong?,' which entirely cures it.

11. Following the customary method of teaching is only for preserving the tradition. Pure awareness results solely from the clarity of the disciple's understanding.

22. When pots, etc. are broken the space within them becomes unlimited. So also when bodies cease to exist the Self remains eternal and unattached.

23. *Nothing whatever is born or dies anywhere at any time. It is Brahman alone appearing illusorily in the form of the world.*

CHAPTER TWO

UNREALITY OF THE WORLD

4. The idea of a (live) snake in a picture of a snake ceases to be entertained when the truth is known. Similarly samsara ceases to exist (when the Truth is realized), even if it continues to, appear.

5. This long-living ghost of a samsara which is the creation of the deluded mind of man and the cause of his sufferings disappears when one ponders over it.

6. O Rama, maya is such that it brings delight through its own destruction; its nature is inscrutable; it ceases to exist even while it is being observed.

25. Just as a tree consisting of fruits, leaves, creepers, flowers, branches, twigs and roots, exists in the seed of the tree, even so this manifest world exists in Brahman.

26. Just as the pot (ultimately) goes back to mud, waves into water and ornaments into gold, so also this world which has come out of the Self (ultimately) goes back to the Self.

27. The snake appears when one does not recognise the rope; it disappears when one recognises the rope. Even so this world appears when the Self is not recognised; it disappears when the Self is recognised.

28. It is only our forgetfulness of the invisible Self which causes the world to appear just as (the ignorance of the) rope (causes the) snake to appear.

29. Just as the dream becomes unreal in the waking state and the waking state in the dream, so also death becomes unreal in birth and birth in death.

30. All these are thus neither real nor unreal. They are the effect of delusion, mere impressions arising out of some past experiences.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MARKS OF A LIBERATED PERSON

(*JIVAN MUKTA*)

14. Like an empty vessel in space (the knower of Truth) is empty both within and without, while at the same time he is full within and without like a vessel immersed in the ocean.

20. The noble-hearted man whose desires of the heart have come to an end is a liberated man; it does not matter whether he does or does not practise meditation or perform action.

21. The idea of Self in the non-Self is bondage. Abandonment of it is liberation. There is neither bondage nor liberation for the ever-free Self.

22. If, by perceiving that the objects of perception do not really exist, the mind is completely freed (from those objects) there ensues the supreme bliss of liberation.

23. Abandonment of all latent tendencies is said to be the best (*i.e.* real) liberation by the wise; that is also the faultless method (of attaining Liberation).

24. Liberation is not on the other side of the sky, nor is it in the nether world, nor on the earth; the extinction of the mind resulting from the eradication of all desires is regarded as liberation.

25. O Rama, there is no intellect, no nescience, no mind and no individual soul (*jiva*). They are all imagined in Brahman.

26. To one who is established in what is infinite, pure consciousness, bliss and unqualified non-duality, where is the question of bondage or liberation, seeing that there is no second entity?

27. O Rama, the mind has, by its own activity, bound itself; when it is calm it is free.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISSOLUTION OF THE MIND

1. Consciousness which is undivided imagines to itself desirable objects and runs after them. It is then known as the mind.

18. Does not the fool feel ashamed to move about in the world as he pleases and talk about meditation when he is not able to conquer even the mind?

21. Association with the wise, abandonment of latent impressions, self-enquiry, control of breathing

- these are the means of conquering the mind.

22. To one who is shod with leather the earth is as good as covered with leather. Even so to the mind which is full (*i.e.* undivided) the world overflows with nectar.

23. The mind becomes bound by thinking 'I am not Brahman'; it becomes completely released by thinking 'I am Brahman'.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DESTRUCTION OF LATENT IMPRESSIONS

1. O Rama, this enquiry into the Self of the nature or 'Who am I?' is the fire which burns up the seeds of the evil tree which is the mind.

2. Just as the wind does not affect the creepers in a picture, so also afflictions do not affect one whose understanding is fortified by firmness and (always) reflected in the mirror of enquiry.

3. The knowers of truth declare that enquiry into the truth of the Self is knowledge. What is to be known is contained in it like sweetness in milk.

8. O pure soul, cherish the association of sages and the true scriptures; you will attain the state of Supreme Consciousness not in the course of months but days.

CHAPTER SIX

MEDITATION ON THE SELF

1. I, the pure, stainless and infinite Consciousness beyond maya, look upon this body in action like the body of another.

6. I am above everything; I am present everywhere; I am like space; I am that which (really) exists; I am unable to say anything beyond this.

9. The world which has come into existence on account of my ignorance has dissolved likewise in me. I now directly experience the world as supreme bliss of consciousness.

10. I prostrate to myself who am within all beings, the ever-free Self abiding as inner Consciousness.

CHAPTER SEVEN

METHOD OF PURIFICATION

8. O mighty-armed, be always free from mental concepts like the heart of a rock though not insentient like it.

9. Do not be that which is understood, nor the one who understands. Abandon all concepts and remain what you are.

10. Eliminate one concept by another and the mind by the mind and abide in the Self. Is this so difficult, O holy man?

11. Sever the mind, which has on account of its cares become red hot, with the mind which is like iron sharpened by the study of scriptures.

12. O Raghava, what have you to do with this inert and dumb body? Why do you feel helpless and miserable by joys and sorrows on account of it?

CHAPTER EIGHT

WORSHIP OF THE SELF

1. If you separate yourself from the body and abide at ease in Consciousness you will become one (the sole Reality), everything else appearing (insignificant) like grass.

2. After knowing that by which you know this (world) turn the mind inward and then you will see clearly (*i.e.* realize) the effulgence of the Self.

3. O Raghava, that by which you recognise sound, taste, form and smell, know that as your Self, the Supreme Brahman, the Lord of lords.

4. O Raghava, that in which beings vibrate, that which creates them, know that Self to be your real Self.

5. After rejecting, through reasoning, all that can be known as 'non-truth' what remains as pure Consciousness - regard that as your real Self.

11. The sense of perceiver and perceived is common to all embodied beings, but the Yogi worships the One Self.

CHAPTER NINE

EXPOSITION OF THE SELF

11. Just as the sky is (*i.e.* appears to be) stained by dust, smoke and clouds, so also the pure Self in contact with the qualities of maya is (*i.e.* appears to be) soiled by them.

12. Just as metal in contact with fire acquires the quality of fire (namely heat), so also the senses, etc. in contact with the Self acquire the quality of the Self.

13. Just as the invisible Rahu becomes visible when it is seized by the moon (*i.e.*, comes in contact with the moon), even so the Self is known by experiencing objects of perception.

14. When water and fire come together they acquire the qualities of each other. Even so when the Self

and the inert body come together the Self looks like the non-Self and the non-Self looks like the Self.

15. Just as fire thrown into a large sheet of water loses its quality, so also Consciousness in contact with the unreal and the inert seems to lose its real nature and becomes inert.

16. The Self is realised in the body only with effort, like sugar from the sugarcane, oil from sesame seeds, fire from wood, butter from a cow and iron from stones (*i.e.* ore).

29. Awareness is Brahman; the world is Brahman; the various elements are Brahman; I am Brahman; my enemy is Brahman; my friends and relatives are Brahman.

30. The idea of a consciousness and an object of consciousness is bondage; freedom from it is liberation. Consciousness, the object of consciousness and everything else is the Self; this is the gist of all systems of philosophy.

31. There is only consciousness here; this universe is nothing but consciousness; you are consciousness; I am consciousness; the worlds are consciousness - that is the conclusion.

32. That which exists and that which shines (*i.e.* is known to exist) are all the Self; anything else which seems to shine does not (really) exist. Consciousness alone shines by itself. Ideas of knower and known are idle postulates.

CHAPTER TEN

NIRVANA

1. Supreme Bliss cannot be experienced through contact of the senses with their objects. The supreme state is that in which the mind is annihilated through one-pointed enquiry.

2. The bliss arising from the contact of the senses with their objects is inferior. Contact with the sense-objects is bondage; freedom from it is liberation.

3. Attain the pure state between existence and non-existence and hold on to it; do not accept or reject the inner or the outer world.

10. If one meditates on that state which comes at the end of the waking state and the beginning of sleep he will directly experience undecaying bliss.

11. The rock-like state in which all thoughts are still and which is different from the waking and dream states, is one’s supreme state.

12. Like mud in a mud pot the Supreme Lord who is existence and space-like consciousness and bliss exists everywhere non-separate (from things).

28. That consciousness which is the witness of the rise and fall of all beings, know that to be the immortal state of supreme bliss.

29. Every moving or unmoving thing whatsoever is only an object visualised by the mind. When the

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mind is annihilated duality (*i.e.* multiplicity) is not perceived.

30. That which is immutable, auspicious and tranquil, that in which this world exists, that which manifests itself as the mutable and immutable objects - that is the sole consciousness.

31. Before discarding the slough the snake regards it as itself, but when once it has discarded it in its hole it does not look upon it as itself any longer.

35. Just as still water may be said to contain or not contain ripples, so also Brahman may be said to contain or not contain the world. It is neither void nor existence.